

The

Montana

*Magazine of
History*



October, 1951

Vol. I

No. 4

THE MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

K. Ross Toole, Editor — Albert J. Partoll, Associate Editor

Editorial Board

Merrill G. Burlingame

Robert H. Fletcher*

Anne McDonnell

Paul C. Phillips*

H. G. Merriam*

Norman Winestine

*Associates

Correspondence in reference to subscriptions, membership, and manuscripts should be sent to the Historical Society of Montana, Helena, Montana. Sufficient postage for return should accompany unsolicited manuscripts.

THE MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, statements of fact, opinion, annotations or reviews.

**PUBLISHED QUARTERLY, JANUARY, APRIL, JULY, OCTOBER
BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MONTANA**

“To Preserve, To Publish, and to Promote Interest in,
The History of Montana”

NAEGELE PRINTING CO., HELENA, MONT.



Application for Mailing of ^{1st} Second Class Matter Pending

THE MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

Volume 1

October, 1951

Number 4

Contents

The Hard Winter and The Range Cattle Business— By Ray H. Mattison	5
T. J. Walsh: Foundations of a Senatorial Career— By J. Leonard Bates	23
The Flathead Apostasy: An Interpretation— By Richard Forbis	35
Edgerton and Lincoln— Edited by Anne McDonnell	42
A Journey to Benton— By Thomas Francis Meagher	46
Smoke Signals— By Bob Fletcher	59
Book Reviews	66
Contributors	72

Board of Trustees

Norman Winestine, President
Helena

Merrill G. Burlingame, V.-Pres.

Bozeman

Charles A. Bovey

Great Falls

Mrs. A. J. White

Helena

Howard A. Johnson

Butte

William R. Mackay

Roseoe

Mrs. Jessie Duthie

Forsyth

Sam Gilully

Glasgow

Albert J. Partoll, Sec.

Missoula

Lena Bissonette

Deer Lodge

Jean Bishop

Dillon

Lester Loble

Helena

Ben Harwood

Billings

Josephine I. Hepner

Helena

Norman Holter

Helena



"WAITING FOR A CHINOOK," OR "THE LAST OF FIVE THOUSAND"

COPYRIGHTED BY BEN ROBERTS, 1922

C. CASE

WAITING FOR A CHINOOK," OR "THE LAST OF FIVE THOUSAND"

THE LAST OF THE FIVE THOUSAND
OR
WAITING FOR A CHINOOK

The first article in this issue by Ray H. Mattison concerns the hard winter of 1886-87. That winter, as Mattison competently demonstrates, helped to sound the death knell of the range cattle industry as it was then known. It was a great and terrible tragedy for animal and man but two good things came out of it; Charlie Russell and a solid cattle industry on firm economic foundations.

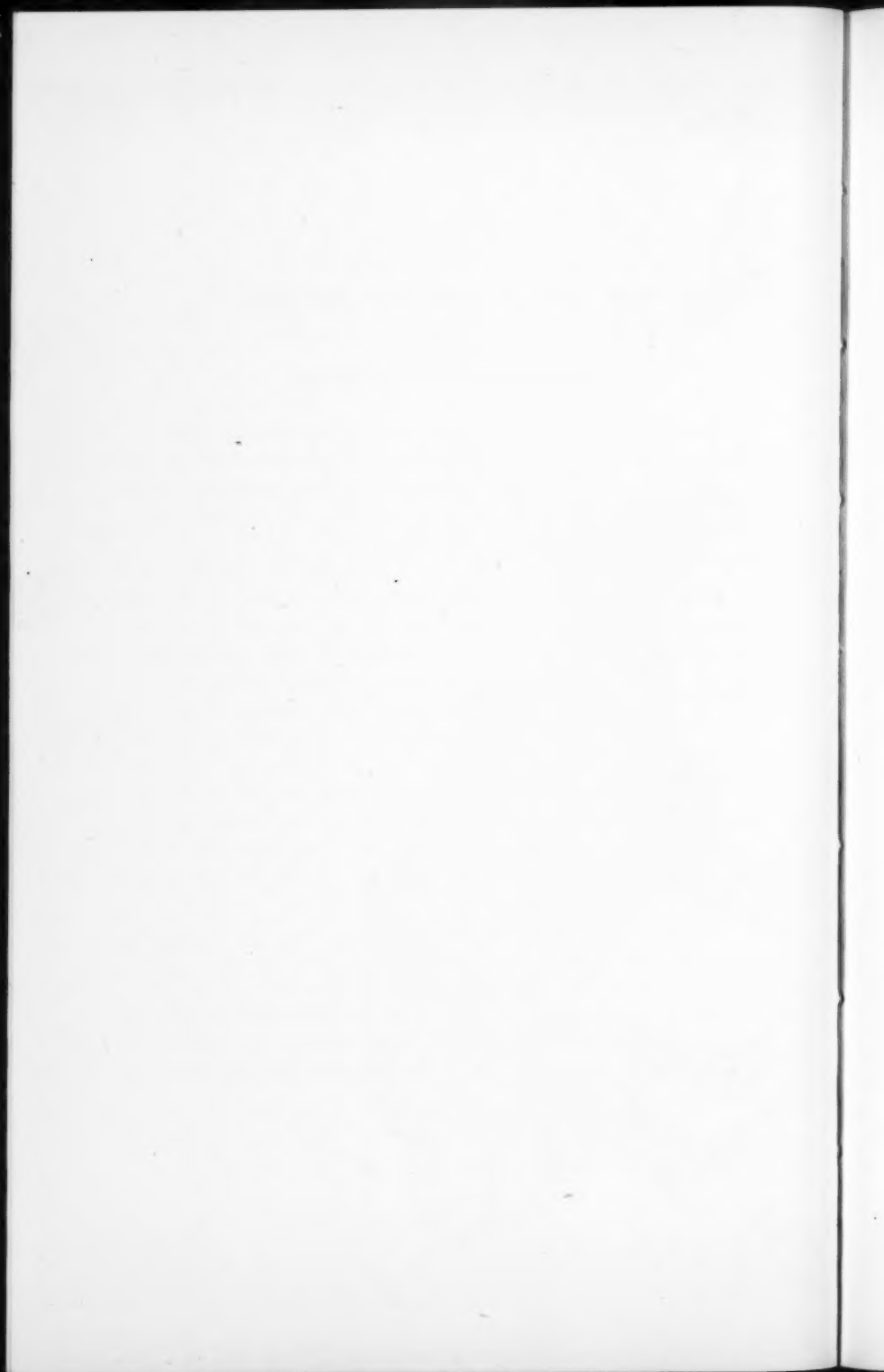
That winter Charlie Russell, as Mattison points out, was a range rider for Stadler and Kaufman, large cattlemen. He made his first appearance as a "cowboy artist" by painting the gaunt animal on the opposite page. Russell's employers wrote him inquiring about the condition of the stock in his charge. He did not write in return, but with his brush painted this picture. It told its own story.

Artistically the picture may be bad. Russell was only twenty-one and he had not yet developed much as an artist. But the painting became famous and is still, perhaps, his most noted work. The original now belongs to the Montana Stock Growers Association.

Incidentally, in case you're wondering why we feature so much Russell in this magazine, there are two reasons: First, nothing is more typically Montana than a Russell; second, our printer has only Russell cuts in stock. In due course we'll work in sketches and paintings by other Montana artists because, much as we admire Russell, it is true, nonetheless, that Montana **has** produced other artists.

COPYRIGHT 1927 BY BEN ROSS & HELEN





THE HARD WINTER AND THE RANGE CATTLE BUSINESS

By Ray H. Mattison

No other single factor dealt such a severe blow to the open range cattle industry in the northern plains region as the winter of 1886-1887. In the words of Professor Edward E. Dale, one of the best qualified writers on the subject, "The range cattle industry never recovered from that terrible winter of 1886-1887, with which no other in the memory of the oldest inhabitants could even remotely compare."¹ According to Granville Stuart, prominent Montana stockman, "In the fall of 1886 there were more than one million head of cattle on the Montana ranges and the losses in the 'big storm' amounted to twenty million dollars. This was the death knell to the range cattle business on anything like the scale it had been run before."²

However, to attribute the winter of 1886-1887 as an isolated factor which crippled the industry is an over-simplification. The decline of the open range cattle business following the winter was due to a combination of circumstances which had been developing for a number of years. Had there been no severe winter the loss would probably have been great.³ In 1886-1887 "nature and economics seemed to conspire together for the entire overthrow of the industry."⁴

During the 1870's and early 1880's, ranching on the plains region of the west was regarded as a quick and easy way of making money. Thousands of dollars were poured into it by investors in the east as well as in Scotland and England. The millions of acres of "free grass" on the public domain were regarded as being without limit. The period of the greatest boom for the industry was from 1880 to 1885.⁵

¹ Edward Everett Dale, *Cow Country* (Norman, 1945) 108.

² Granville Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier* (Paul C. Phillips, Editor, Cleveland, 1925). In two volumes, 2:236.

³ Ernest Staples Osgood, *The Day of the Cattleman* (Minneapolis, 1929) 219-220.

⁴ Robert S. Fletcher, "That Hard Winter in Montana, 1886-1887," *Agricultural History*, Vol. IV, No. 4 (October, 1930) 123.

⁵ Dale, *op. cit.*, 67-106; Osgood, *op. cit.*, 83-113; Louis Pelzer, *The Cattleman's Frontier* (Glendale, 1936) 87-133; Harold R. Briggs, "Ranching and Stock-Raising in the Territory of Dakota," *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Vol. XIV (Pierre, 1928) 417-440; Hazel Adele Pulling, "History of the Range Cattle Industry of Dakota," *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Vol. XX, (Pierre, 1940) 467-499.

Following the Civil War, the Texas ranges had become overstocked. Due to the lack of water, heat, pests and disease, that state was not regarded as a good finishing ground for cattle although it was, because of its mild climate, a good breeding ground. Consequently, the ranchers in that state were compelled to seek new ranges to the north. It is estimated that between 1866 and 1885 a total of 5,700,000 cattle were driven north from the Lone Star state — some to market; others to fatten on the northern ranges. By the late 1870's and early 1880's, the Texans had established ranches along the upper Little Missouri River.*

Without doubt many, such as young Theodore Roosevelt of New York and others, were influenced to go into cattle ranching in the Little Missouri region by the propaganda which hailed it as one of the best ranges in the world. Contemporary Dakota newspapers continued throughout the early 1880's to advertise the Badlands along that river as an excellent cattle country. As early as 1880, when the Northern Pacific Railway was being constructed through the region, its superior qualities as a stock country were noted. The newspapers continued to point out that with the abundant supply of nutritious native grasses which sustained cattle throughout the severe winter months no supplemental feed was necessary and the stock would come through the winter fat and ready for market. They also pointed out that the natural protection in the Badlands was such that stock needed no sheds or artificial protection whatever. To bear out these statements they quoted rancher after rancher as saying that his winter losses were negligible. Statistics were given showing how a man, starting in ranching with a small investment, could become independently wealthy within a few years.†

Where is the man who wants to be cattle king in western Dakota? [asked the *Mandan Daily Pioneer* in July, 1883]. Let him come at once and select a desirable location, and we venture to say that in ten years his money will load a box car.‡

John Clay, who represented several cattle companies financed by Scotch and English capital, told of traveling from Dickinson for three days to the ranch of William and Valentine Dickey south of that town in 1883 without seeing a house. After describing the excellent grasses he found in that year he remarked "and

* Lewis F. Crawford, *History of North Dakota*, (Chicago and New York, 1931). In three volumes, 1:484; Osgood, *op. cit.*, 32, 195-196.

† *Bismarck Weekly Tribune*, Feb. 13, 1880; *Mandan Pioneer*, June 13, 1882, Feb. 8, 1884; *Daily Pioneer* (Mandan), Feb. 10, July 9, 1883; *Bad Lands Cow Boy* (Medora), Feb. 7, 14, 21, March 6, 13, 27, June 19, 23, 1884, Jan. 8, 29, Feb. 5, Aug. 27, 1885.

‡ *Daily Pioneer*, July 9, 1883.

then to think in three years time this fair land should be bare as Sahara."⁹

The open range cattle business in the Little Missouri region, in common with that of the plains region generally, reached the height of its prosperity about 1885. In that year, cattle prices were still high and the prospects for the future optimistic. A list of the prominent cattle ranches along the Little Missouri in 1885 shows the cosmopolitan character of the industry in the Badlands. They were: Hughes and Simpson ("Hashknife"), Towers and Gudgeon ("OX"), Berry, Boice Cattle Company ("777"), all of whom drove large herds from Texas to their northern ranches; the Neimmela ranch, managed by Gregor Lane and financed by Sir John Pender of London; S. D. and B. Rumsey of Buffalo, New York; Le Moyne Cattle Company, financed largely by Julius Le Moyne of Washington, Pennsylvania; Bad Lands Cattle Company, a Minnesota outfit; the Custer Trail Cattle Company, financed primarily by A. C. Huidekoper of Meadville, Pennsylvania; the Maltese Cross and Elkhorn ranches, supported by Theodore Roosevelt of New York; the Northern Pacific Refrigerator Car Company, financed by Marquis de Mores of France and L. A. Von Hoffman, New York; Badger Cattle Company, supported by W. A. Van Brunt and others from Wisconsin.¹⁰ The Badlands ranches were stocked with cattle brought in from Texas, Nebraska, Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota and the Territory of Wyoming.¹¹

Throughout 1884 and 1885 the outlook for the Badlands stockmen was optimistic. Medora's newspaper, *The Bad Lands Cow Boy*, continued to point out during 1884 that the region was the best cattle country in the world and urged stockmen to come there.¹² In July of the following year, however, it predicted that in another year the Badlands would be as full of range cattle as would be profitable.¹³ There was an abundance of rain during the spring and summer of 1885. The fall, however, was dry and there were extensive prairie fires which left large stretches of the country bare.¹⁴ The winter of 1885-1886 was not a severe one and

⁹ John Clay, *My Life on the Range* (privately printed, 1924) 91.

¹⁰ Montana Stock Growers Association, *Brand Book of the Montana Stockgrowers Association for 1886*, *passim*.

¹¹ Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 201.

¹² *Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Feb. 7, 14, 21, March 6, 13, 27, June 19, July 24, 1884.

¹³ *Ibid.*, July 9, 1885.

¹⁴ *Bad Lands Cow Boy*, June 25, Oct. 1, 1885; *Bad Lands Cow Boy* quoted in the *Bismarck Tribune*, Aug. 2, 1885; *The Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, Sept. 11, 1886.

there was little snow in eastern Montana and western Dakota.¹⁵

The summer of 1886 was an extremely hot and dry one. In July the **Cow Boy** reported: "The oldest citizen is at last cornered. In all his Dakota experience there is nothing like the continued hot weather of the last three weeks . . ." ¹⁶

A number of factors late in 1885 and during 1886, other than the weather, seemed to conspire against the cattlemen on the northern ranges. Although the winter of 1885-1886 was a mild one in the northern regions, it was an extremely severe one on the already overstocked southern ranges. In August, 1885, over 200,000 cattle were forced out of Indian Territory by an edict of President Cleveland. These cattle were compelled to move on to the already heavily grazed ranges of adjoining states which were to face one of their severest winters in history. "Starvation and the blizzard did their work, and in the spring of 1886 the cattlemen in these regions found the carcasses of 85 per cent or more of their herds in the ravines or piled up along the drift fences."¹⁷

Another factor was the price situation. The industry, as stated earlier, which had reached the height of its prosperity in 1885, began to show signs of a decline. Influenced by the prospects of easy money and large profits, many of the large ranching concerns had borrowed heavily and had overstocked their ranges. As a result, beef prices dropped considerably in 1885 and even more abruptly in 1886. The more optimistic (probably the large majority at that time) believed this decline in the market to be only temporary and held their cattle for higher prices.¹⁸ The **Dickinson Press**, however, during the summer of 1886, predicted that shipment from that point would be the largest ever made.¹⁹

During the summer of that year, in spite of the parched conditions of the ranges, large herds of cattle continued to be shipped or driven into western Dakota and Montana. "Cattlemen from the south forsook dried up pastures and, with hopes of finding greener and less crowded fields, moved numerous herds into the Dakota ranges."²⁰ The **Dickinson Press** stated that the Continental Cattle Company, the largest outfit in Dakota Territory, had 30,000 cattle on the trail from Texas and when these arrived,

¹⁵ **Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter**, Sept. 11, 1886; **Bad Lands Cow Boy** quoted in **Montana Live Stock Journal** (Helena) Jan., 1886, p. 5.

¹⁶ **Bad Lands Cow Boy** quoted in **Bismarck Daily Tribune**, July 17, 1886.

¹⁷ Osgood, *op. cit.*, 217-218; See also Dale, *op. cit.*, 106-107; Clay, *op. cit.*, 93.

¹⁸ Dale, *op. cit.*, 106; Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 123; Briggs, *op. cit.*, 455.

¹⁹ **Dickinson Press**, Aug. 7, 1886.

²⁰ Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 213; See also Briggs, *op. cit.*, 450-451; 454-455.

it would have 80,000 head on its range south of that town.²¹ The Dickeys also drove 7,000 southern cattle into the Little Missouri and Belle Fourche regions.²²

The future of the range cattle industry in Dakota continued to appear increasingly pessimistic as the summer of 1886 progressed. Roosevelt, interviewed by a reporter when he passed through Mandan in mid-July, painted anything but a rosy picture.

A few days ago, Mr. Theodore Roosevelt passed through Mandan on his way to New York after spending four months on his ranch in the western part of the territory. . . . Then, speaking of the season on the ranches, he stated where they are wisely and honestly managed they are now paying fairly well but no excessive profits. The days of excessive profits are over. There are too many in the business. In certain sections of the west the losses this year are enormous, owing to the drouth and overstocking. Each steer needs from fifteen to twenty-five acres, but they are crowded on very much thicker, and the cattlemen this season have paid the penalty. Between the drouth, the grasshoppers, and the late frosts, ice forming as late as June 10, there is not a green thing in all the region he has been over. . . .²³

Contemporary newspapers throughout Montana and Dakota, usually optimistic, continued to paint a more and more gloomy picture as fall approached. Everything admittedly depended on the coming winter.

There is no disguising the fact that stockmen are just at present in a situation which is anything but comforting [admitted the *Glendive (Montana) Times* on August 1]. The livestock market is at the lowest ebb and most stockmen are adverse to shipping until it shows some improvement, but the condition of the ranges does not encourage this desire to hold their cattle. The dry season has resulted in very short grass, which though exceedingly rich and nutritious, is not abundant. The fires have devastated a large amount of grazing and, as is usual, the very best of that. . . .

The following month, the *Helena Independent* reported. . . . It is doubtful if the total precipitation, snow and rain, has averaged two inches over the whole territory during the past twelve months. . . . The consequence was a season of unprecedented heat and one marked by low streams and lack of irrigating water. . . . All over the territory the same cry has gone up. The grass on the ranges grew but slimly and cured

²¹ Dickinson Press, Aug. 7, 1886.

²² Clay, op. cit., 93.

²³ Mandan Pioneer, July 16, 1886.

before its time for lack of moisture. . . . Much depends upon the coming winter. . . .²⁴

As autumn passed everything seemed to presage a very severe winter. The usual fall rains did not come. The old timers noted that what few beaver were left in the country piled up abnormal quantities of saplings for winter food; also that the bark on the younger cottonwood trees was of an unusual thickness and toughness; the native birds such as the wax wings and snowbirds had bunched together earlier than usual and showed uneasiness throughout the fall. The ducks and geese flew south earlier than usual. Even the range cattle took on a longer and shaggier coat of hair. The muskrats along the creeks built their houses twice their ordinary height and their fur was longer and heavier than usual. The Arctic owls, which came only in severe winters, were about. Since all signs pointed to a severe winter, the stockmen made what preparation they could to meet it.²⁵

According to contemporary newspapers, severe blizzards struck the latter part of November and continued.

The storm of Monday and Tuesday night [Nov. 22 and 23] in this locality was, in many respects, the worst on record [stated the *Bismarck Daily Tribune*]. The snow drifted to a greater extent than ever before and it penetrated buildings wherever it was possible for wind to find its way. . . .²⁶

The *Glendive Times* reported on November 27: .

Great storms still continue. . . . As a storm period the past two weeks exceeds anything heretofore experienced in the Northwest.

At the same time, the Miles City *Yellowstone Journal* recorded:

Although not wholly unexpected, eastern Montana's portion of the furious storms which have been prevailing east and west opened up on us Sunday morning, catching many unprepared. . . .²⁷

The minimum temperatures which were probably not official, recorded at Glendive, showed that the average minimum temperature from November 15 to 30 was 10°. The lowest was -12° on November 23; the highest 37° on the 29th.²⁸

²⁴ *Helena Independent in The Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, Sept. 11, 1886.

²⁵ Lincoln A. Lang, *Ranching With Roosevelt* (Philadelphia, 1926) 239; Hermann Hagedorn, *Roosevelt in the Bad Lands* (Boston, 1921) 431-432; Stuart, *op. cit.*, 234.

²⁶ *Bismarck Daily Tribune*, Nov. 24, 1886.

²⁷ *The Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, Nov. 27, 1886.

²⁸ *Glendive Times*, Feb. 5, 1887.

The temperatures at Glendive apparently moderated during the early part and the middle of December. Although the minimum temperature was -24° on December 4, it was comparatively mild through the 22nd, the average minimum for the period being 11° .²⁰ Items in the *Glendive Times* for this period also indicate that much of December was mild.

[Dec. 4]. The warm weather raised the river, and Tuesday evening the ice moved out, but at this writing, the prospects are for a speedy closing up again. —Later. It closed.

[Dec. 11]. The weather continues more like Indian summer than winter and the snow is daily growing beautifully less.

[Dec. 18]. While the people of the east are wading through snow, shivering from cold and housed up by cutting winds the past week the people of Glendive enjoyed sunshine with the thermometer making 50° above zero Monday, followed by a rain-storm, which was in turn succeeded by more sunshine. This is not the worst country to live in by any means.

Factors other than shortage of grass, low temperatures and an abundance of snow, tended to make the winter of 1886-1887 a severe one for livestock. It is possible for all the above elements to be present without having bankrupting losses. The "hard winter" had a combination of disastrous conditions. The winter started with a heavy fall of snow. This was followed by the mild weather of mid-December which melted the top of the snow forming a crust of impenetrable ice. The snow then melted no more. The weather settled down to several months of permanently low temperatures. In their efforts to get to the grass, the cattle's noses were cut by the snow granules and became raw, bloody and swollen. In walking over the crusted snow, the cattle broke through lacerating their legs. They lost strength, heart and finally life.²¹

Late in December, the weather turned extremely cold. These sub-zero conditions continued until the middle of January. The temperature at Glendive on December 25 reached a low of -35° . From December 23 to January 15, 1887, the average minimum was -11.3° . For only four days was the minimum temperature above the zero mark.²² Lewis Crawford, an historian, who made a study of the United States Weather Bureau Reports at Bismarck for that winter, states: "... On December 26, 1886, the temperature was 34° below zero; on January 1st and 2nd, 1887, 41° and 44° below, and on the 6th, 7th and 8th of the month, 37° , 40° and 42°

²⁰ Idem.

²¹ Crawford, *op. cit.*, 511.

²² *Glendive Times*, Feb. 5, 1887.

below. . . ."²² The outlook for the stockmen became steadily worse.

During this period, the stockmen began to feel increasingly uneasy about their cattle and sheep. This anxiety is reflected in the contemporary newspapers. On January 7, 1887 the **Bismarck Daily Tribune** reported: "According to the Mandan Pioneer stock between Mingusville [Wibaux, Montana] and the Bad Lands is suffering for food. The snow is too deep for the cattle to rustle." The **Glendive Times**, while not optimistic, expressed hope that a break would occur in the weather.

The range interests are in anything but an encouraging condition, according to the information so far received from various sources. This winter, while it has not been as cold as some previous years, it is a harder winter on stock from the fact that the snow is of greater depth and remains where it fell with a persistency heretofore unknown. . . ."

The extremely cold weather in early January was followed by several days of moderate weather. The **Glendive Times** reported rain and moderate weather on January 15. This was followed by freezing weather. The **Yellowstone Journal** the following week stated that "The excessive thaw and rain of last week was unseasonable, and unaccompanied as it was by any wind, it simply reduced the twelve inches or so of dry snow that had fallen, to a wet and soggy mass of less than half the depth. This being succeeded by smart freezing weather has made pretty tough rustling for the cattle."²³

Nor did the prospects for the stockmen improve during the last half of January. Minimum temperatures at Glendive averaged -11° ; on January 30, it was -25° ; on the 31st, it was -31° .²⁴ Bismarck, on January 30 and 31, recorded 34° and 32° below, respectively.²⁵ The **Mandan Pioneer** observed:

More snow has fallen this year than any previous year in west Dakota in the recollection of the oldest inhabitant. The prairie is covered on a level with flakes of feathery white, to the depth of from two to four feet, and many of the cuts, ravines and coulees are filled even with the banks on either side—containing snow enough for a perfect torrent when the break-up comes in the spring. . . ."

²² Crawford, *op. cit.*, 512.

²³ **Glendive Times**, Jan. 8, 1887.

²⁴ **The Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter**, Jan. 22, 1887.

²⁵ **Glendive Times**, Feb. 5, 1887.

²⁶ Crawford, *op. cit.*, 512.

²⁷ **Mandan Pioneer**, Jan. 21, 1887.

The **Glendive Times** still expressed anxiety but looked hopefully for any early spring.

The snow fall this winter has been greater in this section than in any winter since that of 1880 and 1881; six years ago . . . It will be disastrous still if it [the large amount of snow and the extreme cold] continues very much longer, but here we are the last of January and it seems unreasonable and beyond precedent to expect the continuance of this weather much longer. . . ."

Those who had hoped for a moderate February, however, were doomed to disappointment. The **Yellowstone Journal** gave an excellent description of the storm which occurred the last of January and early February and speculated on its probable effect on the livestock industry.

The effects of this storm following the other so closely and with such severely cold weather intervening, cannot be otherwise than extremely disastrous to the livestock interests of this locality. It is useless to speculate on the percentage of loss that must occur, but it is certain that the mortality in sheep, where no provision has been made to feed them, will be very large and all but the robust and well-conditioned cattle must succumb to it. . . ."

Temperatures were extremely low in the first half of February. The minimum temperatures at Glendive from February 1 to 12 averaged -27.5° .³² At Bismarck, February started with 43° below; on the 3rd, the thermometer recorded -34° ; on the 12th, it was 43° below.³³

Perhaps the best summary for the "hard winter" is made by Crawford. He states:

. . . The weather bureau at Bismarck for period of 1875-1929 shows that the mean temperatures for November and December, 1886, were respectively 1.9° and 9.2° below the normal, while January and February were respectively 12.4° and 12.9° below. The least one can say is that the four winter months were unusually cold, but that is not all from the stockmen's standpoint. . . . A month with a high average temperature but with a few extremely cold days will cause a much larger loss than a month with a more uniform temperature even though the mean temperature be lower. Here again the temperature in '86-'87 was out of the ordinary [pointing out the days with extreme subzero temperatures] . . .³⁴

Early in March a "chinook" struck the northern plains region and the snow quickly disappeared.

³² **Glendive Times**, Jan. 29, 1887.

³³ **The Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter**, Feb. 5, 1887.

³⁴ **Glendive Times**, Feb. 5, 12, 1887.

³⁵ Crawford, loc. cit., 512.

³⁶ **The Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter**, March 5, 1887.

The entire Missouri Slope has been cheered by a "chinook" of three days length this week [stated the **Dakota Settler and Burleigh County Farmer** of Bismarck on March 5]. At the close of one hundred days of the severest winter weather that this region has even known the warm wind bared the hills, settled the snow on the prairies, and in places started the running water in the valleys. . .

The **Yellowstone Journal** noted:

All day Sunday and yesterday the glorious chinook with unabated vigor has been undoing the work of the ice king and under its warm influence the snow has disappeared as if by magic. . ."

The severe winter was over.

The cowboys and ranchers marooned in their isolated cabins, many without adequate supplies for months, had been unable to care for their stock. Travel by horseback was impossible except over the most frequented trails. As a result, the cattle had died by the thousands."

Early in January, 1887, the contemporary newspapers began to mention heavy losses in certain kinds of cattle. They pointed out the unsound practices of the beef bonanza ranchers and did not hesitate to recommend more conservative methods and practices in stockraising. The **Glendive Times** for January 8 noted the heavy losses among the cows with late calves and blamed this heavy toll on the "short sighted policy" of allowing the bulls to run on the range throughout the year. It recommended that stockmen prepare sheds in which to care for the ill-conditioned cattle and late calves. "As the matter now stands [stated that newspaper] there is no excuse for half the loss that will be experienced this winter." The **Yellowstone Journal** placed a part of the blame for the appalling losses on the overstocked condition of the range.

. . . Notwithstanding the unusual severity of the past winter, which was the cause of heavy losses, there are still too many cattle on the present limited range, considering the extended drouth during the past season. The limit of its capacity is fast being approached. Taking the whole range country into view, it seems plain that there is little prospect for the further expansion of the range cattle interests under the present methods. . ."

The following week the **Journal** pointed out that hardy native cattle were wintering well while the "pilgrims" or trail cattle

"**Mandan Pioneer**, March 4, 1887.

"Theodore Roosevelt, **Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail** (New York, 1899) 78.

"**Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter**, Jan. 15, 1887.

would probably suffer considerably because they arrived on the overstocked northern ranges thin and late in the season; hence their condition was poor at the beginning of the winter.⁴⁶ Many of the cattle drifted into the valleys along the rivers and into the timber. There they were unable to get through the deep snow to the grass and, due both to cold and starvation, succumbed in large numbers. Others stood in the deep snow until their lower extremities were frozen and then they lay down never to rise again. Those ranchers who had their cattle away from the rivers had a much less loss than those along the streams. It was noted that the cattle which wintered the best were the steers which had spent several years on the northern ranges and the "spayed" heifers. The heaviest losses were among the pilgrims, milch cows, calves and bulls.⁴⁷

During this winter a large Montana outfit, Stadler and Kaufman, had in its employ an unknown "range rider" named Charles Russell. Following one of the severe snowstorms of this winter, his employers wrote him as to the condition of the stock under his charge. Russell did not write but with his brush drew a picture which told its own story. The coyotes awaited the last victim of the storm. This picture, known as "The Last of the Five Thousand" or "Waiting for the Chinook" is one of the most noted of Russell's works.

Some of the newspapers predicted that the range cattle industry would undergo a radical change as the result of the losses during the winter and that the small operators with several hundred cattle would replace the large ranchers.

It is extremely probable that the experience of the stockmen of Western Dakota and Montana this winter will bring about a radical change in the present system of stockraising [predicted the *Bismarck Weekly Tribune* on February 26] . . . There has been no proximate estimate of the cattle and sheep frozen and starved to death possible, but it is known that thousands of each have thus perished; some guess that no less than 40 per cent of all the stock in the country at the opening of winter. This experience from the financial standpoint should teach stockmen to keep smaller herds and care for them well . . .

The *Glendive Times* also expressed hope that the industry would ultimately profit from the experiences of the past winter

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 22, 1887.

⁴⁷ *The Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, Jan. 22, 29, Feb. 12, 19, March 5, 26, 1887; *Dickinson Press*, April 2, 16, 1887; *Glendive Times*, Jan. 8, 1887; interview with Bill Follis, WPA Files on History of Ranching, State Historical Society of North Dakota.

and would be placed on a more stable basis." **The Dakota Settler and Burleigh County Farmer** attributed the heavy losses during the winter as due to "carelessness" and recommended the "close-herding" of stock during the winter months."

Early in 1887, the contemporary newspapers as well as the stockmen, began to speculate on the probable losses for the winter. There is a great variation in their estimates. The **Yellowstone Journal** for January 15 was of the opinion that in 1886, twenty-five per cent of the cattle had died in Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. "This estimate may be thought large by some but the condition of the cattle at the beginning of the winter had a great deal to do with the heavy losses during the season" explained the newspaper. On February 11, the **Bismark Tribune** predicted that "losses already reach eight to twenty per cent and it is not overdoing it to say that in event of the snow lying on the ground for four weeks longer the loss may reach from fifty to seventy-five per cent."

It would be some time before the effects of the winter would be known. Early reports were optimistic. Early in March, Henry Boice, manager of the Three-Sevens ranch on the Little Missouri north of the present town of Marmarth, North Dakota, after riding over his range for two weeks, estimated the losses for his company to be not more than forty per cent.²² "When cattlemen begin to get on the range they will discover that the loss is not as much as some have represented," the **Glendive Times** optimistically predicted on March 12. One ranchman, in the vicinity of Miles City, while spending several days on the range, made a close count of the cattle he saw, both dead and alive. From this count he estimated the loss to be only thirteen per cent.²³ One prominent stockman, Granville Stuart, is quoted as estimating the loss of his company from the winter at ten per cent. However, writing years later, he explained, "It was impossible to tell just what losses were for a long time as the cattle drifted in the big January storm. We did not get some of ours back for a year. Our entire losses were sixty-six per cent of the herd."²⁴ Generally the contemporary newspapers as well as the stockmen, per-

²² **Glendive Times**, April 30, 1887.

²³ **Dakota Settler and Burleigh County Farmer**, May 5, 1887.

²⁴ Quoted in William B. Richter, "A Historical Study of Beef Bonanza Ranching in Billings County, Dakota Territory," (MA Thesis, University of Montana, 1941) 106.

²⁵ **Mandan Pioneer**, March 4, 1887.

²⁶ **Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter**, March 26, 1887.

²⁷ Stuart, op. cit., 2:236; **The Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter**, March 19, 1887.

haps for fear of frightening eastern investors, apparently endeavored to minimize their losses early in 1887. The spring and fall roundups would tell the truth.

It is difficult to comprehend why the stockmen failed to realize or admit their losses sooner than they did. John Clay, perhaps, gives the best explanation:

... The returns of the winter losses dribbled in. Men hoped against hope during the spring roundups, but the fall tallies told the ultimate story. I rode the range in those days. Search it minutely and there was no sign of the tragedy. The carcasses withered up by the end of August, a few bones grass-covered at wide intervals and that was all. How the thousands of weak cows and steers that died had left no trace is an enigma. It was not the dead ones that were gone but the live ones that were left that told the tale.⁶⁴

In spite of the optimistic reports of the contemporary newspapers, the ranges must have presented a tragic appearance after the March chinook cleared the region of snow. One writer told of stumps of sagebrush as thick as one's wrist being found all over the range. The cattle, unable to get through the deep snow to the grass, had eagerly devoured the unpalatable sagebrush as far as there was anything edible. One Montana outfit attempted to make its pecuniary losses lighter by skinning the carcasses found on the ranges.⁶⁵

Roosevelt's outlook in the spring of 1887 was anything but optimistic. After spending the winter in Europe with his bride, he returned to New York. From there he hurried to the Badlands to appraise his losses. After spending several days riding over the range, he wrote to his friend Henry Cabot Lodge:

Well, we have had a perfect smashup all through the cattle country of the northwest. The losses are crippling. For the first time I have been utterly unable to enjoy a visit to my ranch. I shall be glad to get home.⁶⁶

The proceedings of the Little Missouri Stockmen's Association and the Montana Stockgrowers Association in the spring and summer of 1887 have been covered in detail by the writer in an earlier article.⁶⁷ These indicate that the stockmen in Montana and along the Little Missouri felt that, as the result of the winter, the industry had anything but a rosy future. The Little Missouri

⁶⁴ Clay, *op. cit.*, 192.

⁶⁵ *Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, March 5, 28, 1887; See also Roosevelt, *op. cit.*, 78.

⁶⁶ *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, 1884-1918* (New York, 1925). In two volumes, 1:54.

⁶⁷ Ray H. Mattison, "Roosevelt and the Stockmen's Association," *North Dakota History*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (July, 1950) 190-200.

Association of which Roosevelt was chairman, decided in its meeting on April 16 that the losses of the members were so heavy that it would not be worthwhile to hold a general roundup that spring and summer. Believing that the cattle had drifted south and east with the storms, it was decided to send men to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in search of cattle.⁸⁸

An atmosphere of gloom prevailed at the meeting of the Montana Stockgrowers Association held in Miles City on April 19 and 20. About 100 of the 337 members, including Roosevelt, attended. The mood of the convention was reflected in the words of its newly-elected president, Joseph Scott:

... I am proud that we have such an attendance; I think that it is proof to us that we are not to bury this large industry, as some have stated, but we are here to revive it, and we are here to see that it does not die. It is true, the chilling winds of last winter have been felt on the range, and in many places you can smell the dead carcasses in the canyons; but the case is not as bad as it might have been. Had the winter continued twenty days longer, we would not have had much necessity of an Association; we would not have had much left to try to do. As it is, I feel we are in a fair position to start again to make good the loss we have suffered the past winter . . .⁸⁹

The general roundups of 1887 proved that the losses were much greater than the optimists predicted in March and April. The Little Missouri stockmen made a roundup of the members' cattle in the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. After spending two weeks there, it found only three steers.⁹⁰ Other roundups throughout Dakota and Montana were almost as disappointing.

The winter of 1886-1887 had far reaching effects upon the open range cattle industry in the Little Missouri region. The losses, in common with those of the northern plains region generally, were very heavy. In determining these losses, it is difficult to arrive at anything like accurate figures. About the only evidence we have is based upon statements made by old timers many years after the severe winter. In many cases their statements differ a great deal. One stated that Hughes and Simpson (the Hashknife) started out in the winter with 65,000 head and that it had only 16,000 the next spring.⁹¹ Another estimated that the company's loss was 8,000 head.⁹² Still another stated that the Hashknife's loss was about 75 per cent.⁹³ Crosby Cattle Com-

⁸⁸ *Idem.*

⁸⁹ Mattison, *op. cit.*, 194-195.

⁹⁰ *Idem*: Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 214.

⁹¹ Richter, *op. cit.*, 108.

⁹² Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 214.

⁹³ Pulling, *op. cit.*, 501.

pany's losses were believed to have been about 80 per cent.⁶⁴ J. L. Driskill lost about two-thirds of his cattle.⁶⁵ Lincoln Lang estimated the loss of the Neimmela ranch at 80 per cent and that of the Little Missouri Badlands as a whole at 85 per cent.⁶⁶ The OX ranch was said to have lost \$250,000 as the result of the winter.⁶⁷ The Three-Sevens outfit, it is claimed, lost about 90 per cent.⁶⁸ Custer Trail ranch lost 80 per cent of its cattle.⁶⁹ The E6 and the Turkey Track ranches had shipped in 27,000 head of cattle during the summer of 1886. It is claimed that they rounded up only 250 head the following year.⁷⁰ Some firms, such as the Dickey brothers were put out of business.⁷¹

A study was made by the writer of the tax records of Billings County, North Dakota to determine the effects of the hard winter on the open range cattle business in the Little Missouri Badlands. Of the twelve largest operators listed in the Census of 1885, the two biggest, Berry Boice Cattle Company and Towers and Guggell, both Texas firms, continued to do business on an extensive scale until near the close of the following decade. Five firms, largely backed by eastern capital, closed out by the end of 1889. In two cases, the Custer Trail Cattle Company and the Neimmela Ranch, the owners refused further financial support and the managers continued in business on their own resources. In three instances, which included that of Theodore Roosevelt, the firms continued in business for several years but with greatly reduced herds. The large abattoir of Marquis de Mores, which had recently been established at Medora, closed for good. The town which he named for his wife and which had such an auspicious beginning became almost a deserted village.⁷²

The range cattle industry throughout the northwest following the hard winter presented a picture similar to that of the Little Missouri region. Several of the largest operators went into bank-

⁶⁴ *Idem.*

⁶⁵ *Idem.*

⁶⁶ Lang, *op. cit.*, 251.

⁶⁷ A. C. Huidekoper, "My Experiences and Investment in the Bad Lands of North Dakota and Some of the Men I Met There," (1924) Ms, State Historical Society of North Dakota, 31.

⁶⁸ Richter, *op. cit.*, 108.

⁶⁹ Richter, *op. cit.*, 108; Huidekoper, *op. cit.*

⁷⁰ W. H. Hamilton, "An Autobiography of a Cowman," *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Vol. XIX (Pierre, 1938) 512.

⁷¹ Clay, *op. cit.*, 94.

⁷² Census Records, Billings County, Dakota, 1885, Ms, State Historical Society of North Dakota; Assessors' Returns, Billings County, Dakota, 1886-1900, Ms, County Auditor's Office, Medora, N. D.; Richter, *op. cit.*, 108; Huidekoper, *op. cit.*, 31.

ruptey. John Clay summarized the effects of the winter as follows:

The cowmen of the West and Northwest were flat broke. Many of them never recovered. They had not the heart to face another debacle such as they had gone through and consequently they disappeared from the scene. Most of the eastern men and Britishers said "enough" and went away. Some remained and their story shall develop as we go along. The late summer and fall of 1887 was, to use the western expression, simply a fright. The big guns toppled over; the small ones had as much chance as a fly in molasses. . .¹³

Professor Robert S. Fletcher states that of 200 cattlemen and cattle companies assessed for over twenty head of cattle in Custer County, Montana in 1886, only 120 were still so assessed two years later, and the average size of their holdings was considerably smaller than at the previous date.¹⁴ Following the winter there was a sharp decline in the number of cattle slaughtered or shipped from Montana. The figures for the period from 1885 to 1890 were as follows:¹⁵

1885	70,089
1886	119,620
1887	82,134
1888	167,662
1889	115,469
1890	174,035

As the result of the winter, many outfits shipped out every marketable steer. Fodder was short in the Corn Belt. The market was flooded with ill-conditioned cattle. Everyone wanted to sell and few wanted to buy. Several far-sighted stockmen, such as Pierre Wibaux, saw in this situation an excellent opportunity to make money. Returning from France following the hard winter with several hundred thousand dollars which he had borrowed from his father, he purchased the "remnants" of many of the herds which had survived the winter. Many of the firms from which he bought were facing bankruptcy; others were eager to sell and get out of the business. These remnants consisted of only the hardest and best cattle that were able to survive the winter. Before 1890, Wibaux had accumulated about 40,000 head. It is claimed that at one time he owned more cattle than any individual in the United States. His range during the 1890's extended

¹³ Clay, *op. cit.*, 179.

¹⁴ Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 120.

¹⁵ Annual Reports of the Montana Board of Stock Commissioners quoted in Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 123.

from the Little Missouri river on the east to the Yellowstone river on the west."¹⁶

The winter of 1886-1887 produced very significant changes in both the operation and the management of the range cattle industry. John Clay, one of the best qualified persons from the standpoint of personal experience to write upon the subject, stated many years later:

The great winter losses of 1886-1887 in the West and the Northwest taught the range owner many things. The days of stock herds were passing and the great catastrophe turned the ranch man to steers more than ever. Then it made him cautious as to debt. It was not fashionable, in fact it was an absolute necessity, to shape your finances so that in the autumn you were free of debt and had a balance in the bank for winter expenses. . . .¹⁷

The days of the beef bonanza were gone. Investors in the East and abroad looked to other fields for quick and easy money. The business was placed on a sober basis. Most northern stockmen found it unwise to run calves and cows on the range without provision for shelter or feed in severe weather. "This meant," according to Professor Fletcher, "that the herds were from this time on divided into two pretty distinct classes: the smaller outfits of mixed stock for which feed and shelter for at least part of the winter were furnished, and the big herds made up almost exclusively of steers brought in from the South and having no feed or shelter provided for them."¹⁸

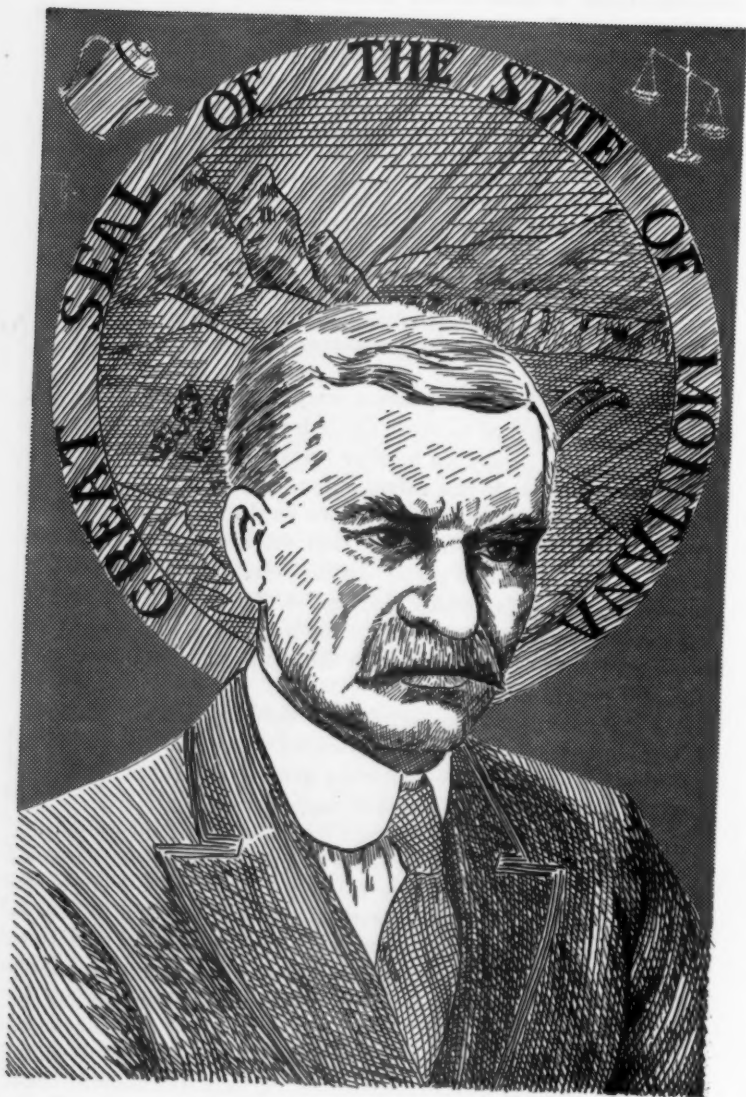
In spite of the serious setback the industry received in 1886-1887, its recovery was surprisingly rapid. The heavy snowfall of the winter, melting, soaked into the ground, produced abundant forage throughout the summer and autumn of 1887. The overstocked condition of the range had been remedied by nature. The winter of 1887-1888 was a mild one and the forage in 1888 was excellent. In 1888 the prices of cattle improved. Before the opening of the 1890's there were more cattle on the Montana ranges than ever before. Emerging somewhat reorganized and operating on a sounder basis, the industry made a surprising comeback. However, the days of the old open range never returned.¹⁹

¹⁶ Interview with W. A. Orgain, Wibaux, Montana by Lewis F. Crawford, June 22, 1925, Ms, State Historical Society of North Dakota; Crawford, *History of North Dakota*, 1:498-499; Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 127; Osgood, *op. cit.*, 225.

¹⁷ Clay, *op. cit.*, 230.

¹⁸ Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 130; See also Osgood, *op. cit.*, 224-225; Dale, *op. cit.*, 109-110.

¹⁹ Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 123, 130; Osgood, *op. cit.*, 224-225; Dale, *op. cit.*, 109-110.



THOMAS J. WALSH (1859-1933)

Sketch By Paul Ferryman

T. J. WALSH:

FOUNDATIONS OF A SENATORIAL CAREER

By J. Leonard Bates

On January 20, 1924, a steely-eyed lawyer from Helena, Montana, now a veteran of twelve years in the United States Senate, experienced his greatest day in court. T. J. Walsh had broken the Teapot Dome case. After months of labor, he had exposed a shocking scandal in the leasing of naval oil reserves. Letters of congratulations poured into his office. One such letter from a prominent author, Montana-born, closed with the prediction that Montana, by electing Walsh its Senator, had "written a page" that would "go down in history."¹ Later writers on the subject have agreed emphatically. Walsh of Montana, slight in build but lithe, with pale complexion, piercing blue eyes, and a gray mustache, always busy, always "loaded" in debate, took his place among such Senate celebrities as Robert M. La Follette, George Norris, William E. Borah, Hiram Johnson, and Carter Glass.

The explanation of Walsh's success in the Senate must begin early—with his family background, his youth in Wisconsin, his move to Dakota territory, and his rapid rise in the legal profession in Montana. He entered the Senate in 1913 at the age of fifty-three and was exceptionally well prepared for the job on Capitol Hill long before his Teapot Dome investigation made the fact so obvious.

Felix Walsh, his father, was born in County Armagh, North Ireland, but in 1844 at the age of twenty-three emigrated to Canada by sailing vessel. After several years in Canada he moved westward to Michigan and then in 1850 to Two Rivers, Wisconsin, on the western shore of Lake Michigan. Bridget Comer came from County Mayo, Ireland, to Canada while a young

¹ Ellis Meredith to Mrs. C. B. Nolan, February 4, 1924, in Thomas Walsh Papers, in the Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. The Walsh Papers are divided by the writer into four categories which seem most practicable for guidance within the collection: Walsh Papers, Personal; Walsh Papers, Political; Walsh Papers, Teapot Dome; and Walsh Papers. The last group is the largest and most general.

girl and then to Wisconsin's Michigan shore. She married Felix Walsh in 1853.²

The Felix Walshes at first lived in an Irish settlement but moved near-by into Two Rivers, whose population was mostly German and French Canadian. Of 263 families living there in 1870 only eight were Irish.³ Important to young Tom Walsh's education was an acquaintance with different national groups. The people of Two Rivers worked in the pail factory, the sawmill, and the chair factory, or engaged in fishing, coopering, tanning, logging, and various other occupations essential to a community barely removed from the frontier. Felix Walsh, who in Ireland had been a weaver, received good pay as a logger, raftsmen, and skilled laborer for hire.⁴

The Walsh children were sent to public schools, which their father enthusiastically supported. They were not permitted to work in the factories, and their father was able to buy a thirty-acre plot near Two Rivers where he and his sons worked in their spare time to produce vegetables and grains and care for several cows and a horse.⁵ The old Two Rivers home had "many dear associations" for Walsh after he became famous.⁶

Two Rivers did not establish a high school until 1877, when Walsh was already teaching in rural schools. Before teaching he took advanced courses offered at the elementary school and undertook to give himself the equivalent of a college education. That he succeeded is apparent; for he mastered subjects requisite for a first grade teacher's certificate, obtained it, and then aimed for the heights—an unlimited state certificate, requiring knowledge of college subjects. He took the examination at Madison in the summer of 1880 and passed. With this certificate Tom Walsh was able to secure better positions, first at Glenbeulah, Wisconsin, in 1880 as principal and teacher of a state-aided high school

² Joseph Schafer, "Thomas James Walsh a Wisconsin Gift to Montana," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXIII (June, 1940), 448. See also an interview with Mrs. Genevieve Walsh Gudger, Walsh's daughter, February 16, 1950, Washington, D. C., hereinafter cited as Mrs. Gudger interview. These two sources agree on essentials and Schafer seems most reliable on some details relating to genealogy and the Wisconsin years. Also for information on his mother see Walsh to Mrs. J. C. Donnelly, December 18, 1929, Walsh Papers, Personal.

³ Mrs. Gudger interview; Schafer, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXIII (June, 1940), 450.

⁴ Schafer, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXIII (June, 1940), 449-52; Mrs. Gudger interview.

⁵ Schafer, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXIII (June, 1940), 449-52; Mrs. Gudger interview.

⁶ Walsh to H. H. Meineke, August 26, 1931, Walsh Papers, Personal.

that had forty-eight pupils.⁷ The two following years he taught at Sturgeon Bay, some distance north of Two Rivers along the Lake shore, where he and one woman assistant had charge of a high school with an enrollment of about eighty. His salary was \$630 yearly.⁸

By this time Walsh had met the girl he was to marry. Her family lived for many years in Sheboygan. Miss Elinor McClements met Tom Walsh and began to follow his career with heartfelt interest notwithstanding a move to Chicago with her family and a teaching career of her own in that city.⁹

A more exciting life than teaching beckoned. Walsh decided to enter the law school at Madison in the fall of 1883. Standards at the University of Wisconsin Law School were not high. Only history, English, and some understanding of the federal constitution were required for admission; the course was for one year; and local practitioners, unfamiliar with the case method, lectured to students who read independently such authorities as Blackstone and Kent. Some of the lecturers, however, like Willima F. Vilas and Ithamar C. Sloan, were men of great learning and ability.¹⁰ One of Walsh's classmates was a bright young lady, Belle Case La Follette, whose husband, Robert M. La Follette, had already graduated and successfully fought the bosses to become county attorney of Dane County.¹¹

A photograph reveals the young law student of 1883 as serious, almost fearsome-looking with his black mustache like an inverted V above a determined mouth. Regular features with high cheek bones, large cool eyes, and thick hair above close-set ears distinguished a handsome head appearing slightly large for the neck and shoulders. He was about five feet eight inches in height and slight in build, then as later. A Unitarian minister

⁷ Schafer, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXIII (June, 1940), 454.

Schafer says this job started just after Walsh passed his examination for an unlimited certificate, but Walsh's own letters say the year was 1880. Schafer's dates are discrepant, moreover, in that Walsh could not teach one year at Glenbeulah and two at Sturgeon Bay, if he began in 1881, and still enter Wisconsin in 1883. See Walsh to B. E. Clark, April 16, 1924, and Walsh to George P. Miller, August 1, 1924, Walsh Papers, Personal.

⁸ Schafer, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXIII (June, 1940), 454; Mrs. Gudge interview.

⁹ Walsh to B. E. Clark, April 16, 1924, Walsh Papers, Personal; Mrs. Gudge interview.

¹⁰ Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, *The University of Wisconsin: A History 1848-1925* (Madison, 1949), I, 453-57; Schafer, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXIII (June, 1940), 454.

¹¹ Mrs. Gudge interview; Robert M. La Follette, *La Follette's Autobiography: A Personal Narrative of Political Experiences* (Madison, 1913), 48, 313.

in Madison was impressed with Walsh's "mental alertness," his "eagerness" to learn, his "moral earnestness," and his courteous but "somewhat shy" manner during the activities of the "Contemporary Club" associated with the Unitarian Church.²²

Almost four million people went west seeking their fortunes in the decade of the eighties, and the young lawyers, Henry and Tom Walsh, were among them. Theirs was a short trek, however, compared to some. Henry went first and Tom followed a year later to southeastern Dakota Territory, where in the town of Redfield they hung out their shingle, beginning a long struggle for success. Tom Walsh recalled how he started out a "perfect stranger . . . hoping to be engaged or called upon to practice law."

The Walsh brothers seem to have been popular and moderately successful. That they enjoyed on an average more than their share of the legal business was the opinion of a leading Redfield lawyer who began his practice in Henry Walsh's office and later made a study of the two Walshes.²³

In spite of a good practice and friendships in Dakota Tom Walsh was dissatisfied. He had to travel from county seat to county seat enduring the rigors of the frontier in order to try his cases and the remuneration did not seem commensurate to his labors. He wrote to Elinor McClements in Chicago that he had heard of a single case in Montana involving \$5,000,000! It hardly seemed there was that much money in all Dakota. Before his marriage to Elinor in 1889 he had decided that he would change his location. Where should he go, however? His asthma and two cases of pneumonia contracted when visiting in Chicago convinced him that he should not stay in the Lake area, even to accept several tempting offers from law firms. Temporarily he and his bride lived in Redfield. At least Elinor did—while her husband traveled over the new state of South Dakota so much that she hardly saw him. Once when traveling in the western part of the state he decided to go on west and reconnoiter in Montana. Writing his wife from Helena, he observed that the lawyers there seemed either to have made their pile or to be dissipating, so that any young and energetic ones had good opportunities. Finally they made their break, moving from South Dakota to Helena,

²² J. H. Crooker to Walsh, November 15, 1928, Walsh Papers, Personal. Dr. Crooker was also pastor in Helena, Montana, when Walsh was there and became a noted lecturer and author on religious subjects.

²³ W. F. Bruell to Joseph Schafer, February 27, 1940, quoted in Schafer, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXIII (June, 1940), 456; and see also *ibid.*, 455-56, for Schafer's views on this subject.

Montana, in 1890 with a four-month-old daughter, Genevieve, and less than \$400.

Helena, Montana, became the Walsh family's new home and hope for success. In view of the South Dakota difficulties and his move to Helena an observation of Walsh's in 1915 seems significant: "While a small town or country practice has its advantages, a commanding position is rarely attained except by those who are located in the great centers of population."¹⁴ Not to be ranked among the great cities of the United States in 1890, Helena none the less had a population of some fourteen thousand and was a great mining center. Its population, including about fifty millionaires, was reputed to be the richest per capita of any city in the United States.¹⁵

In Montana the way of the lawyer was not easy. A story illustrating his early struggles in Helena was related by Walsh. Before he and C. B. Nolan became partners in 1906 they were jointly associated as attorneys for a destitute client. Walsh thought he saw a clear way to victory, but the case was pending for years, going twice to the State Supreme Court. They were obliged to carry the litigation for the client, since he had no money, but they too enjoyed limited wealth. Nolan's gloomy comment on the situation was, "I suppose we might as well let the tail go with the hide." They persisted in their efforts, finally won their case, and got a fee the like of which they never had known before.¹⁶

This story suggests the perseverance, enthusiasm, and ability—as well as charity—that brought Walsh success. Many of his cases concerned mining law, not well established at the time but involving fabulous sums. He and his wife worked early and late to master those cases. Walsh's daughter, Genevieve, remembers that she hardly saw her mother from breakfast until night; even then her parents frequently continued their labors at home.¹⁷ Walsh's carefully planned arguments helped to establish mining law in the state and won him an enviable reputation. Burton K. Wheeler declared, "Walsh was a great lawyer, known all over Montana even before he got into politics."¹⁸ He might have added that Walsh's practice took him to New York, St. Louis, San Fran-

¹⁴ Walsh to D. J. Donahue, December 2, 1915, Walsh Papers, Personal.

¹⁵ Works Progress Administration, *Montana: A State Guide Book* (New York, 1939), 159-161.

¹⁶ Walsh to Governor S. V. Stewart, October 8, 1919, Walsh Papers, Personal.

¹⁷ Mrs. Gudger interview.

¹⁸ Burton K. Wheeler interview.

cisco, and to the Supreme Court in Washington, so that he gained a national reputation. Senator James E. Murray met Walsh as a practicing attorney about 1902 when he already was a good trial lawyer with high standing at the bar. So carefully and shrewdly did he prepare for his cases that he could anticipate every argument. Senator Murray added: "Probably there never was a lawyer in Montana before or since so recognized for his skill."

Walsh was a thin man, but wiry, pale-looking, and very efficient. He never fumbled with papers. He knew just where everything was.

In court he was very austere, clear, cold, precise, inspiring confidence. I guess I never saw a more earnest man . . . His eyes were piercing, almost hypnotic in their effect. . . . He had life, vigor; he was alert and quick."

By the time William Jennings Bryan had lost once again to William McKinley in 1900 and Theodore Roosevelt had moved into the White House in 1901, T. J. Walsh was eagerly sought after for legal services in Montana. Many of his cases were on a contingent fee basis in behalf of poor men, such as laborers injured in the mines or on the railroads. Out of his own experience he once remarked about "the delight of succeeding for the under dog."²⁹ But he was often retained by the Anaconda Copper Company. This powerful company in 1900 offered him a position as counsel which he declined on the ground that he would be glad to serve them when they had a just cause but could not tie himself to any interests.³⁰ His important decision was the subject of a letter that Walsh wrote to B. K. Wheeler many years later.

You may have heard that I once had a most alluring offer to go to Butte, which I promptly and emphatically declined. I was at the time building my house in Helena and was looking forward to enjoying the comforts we found in it. Perhaps that was the consideration most powerful in determining my course at the time. I have often congratulated myself since on the good sense I showed in the face of a very decided temptation. In the first place I remained, as I always had been, no man's man. I enjoyed the independence which I had achieved by hard

²⁹ James E. Murray interview. See also John Wattawa interview and Mrs. Grudger interview. See various articles in *Helena Independent*: July 19, 1906, September 26, 1906, for example. Walsh' opponents frequently began their assaults on him with the admission that he was a great lawyer or a great intellect—but! See Harry H. Parsons, *Montana Record-Herald* (Helena), November 2, 1918.

³⁰ Walsh Notification Speech to John W. Davis, August 11, 1924, quoted in *Helena Independent*, August 12, 1924; *Helena Independent*, September 26, 1906.

³¹ Mrs. Gudger to the writer, November 19, 1949, and Mrs. Gudger interview. Senator Murray and others mentioned one \$50,000 fee allegedly paid to Walsh by Anaconda. Walsh's daughter emphatically denies this story.

labor. As I review the situation now, however, I can see that had I gone to Butte I should either have fallen into one class and been under, even if I did not earn, the suspicion of being subject to orders, or in the other class, deemed by the 'best people' of the town to be something in the nature of outlaws.²²

Walsh was not a wealthy person when he entered politics. He had, however, attained financial independence and comfort. In 1900 for about \$12,000 he built his Helena residence, three-storied and Victorian in plan with a wide porch on two sides;²³ in the nineties he had invested in some East Helena lots and built two small houses;²⁴ he invested in other property here and there, for example, timber land in Flathead County from whose sale in 1923 he received \$22,440 and the Stewart Hotel in Seattle from whose sale in 1931 he realized \$14,299;²⁵ furthermore he kept a good deal of money moving in various investments, most of them small. In March, 1916, however, he mentioned \$25,000 for which he was seeking investment. Among his large holdings of 1916-1917 were about \$16,000 in Northern Pacific and Great Northern railroad stock and something like \$11,000 in Anaconda Copper Mining Stock.²⁶ In 1924 when the president of the American Press Association stated that Walsh was a rich man he remonstrated that the most he could muster was \$100,000.²⁷

An investment in the Helena **Independent** proved a disappointment to Walsh. Will Campbell, Walsh, and other leading Democrats in 1913 contributed to the purchase of the paper, and Campbell became the editor. Walsh hoped for a "clean democratic newspaper" that would be helpful politically and also a stimulus to Helena and the state's growth.²⁸ A short time later he wrote: "It is rather unfortunate to be placed in the position in which I find myself of being held responsible for every fool thing

²² Walsh to B. K. Wheeler, January 21, 1921, Walsh Papers, Personal.

²³ Walsh to C. A. Rasmussen, November 3, 1931, Walsh Papers, Personal.

²⁴ Walsh to C. S. Haire, May 20, 1920, Walsh Papers, Personal.

²⁵ Walsh to Fred Whiteside, December 31, 1923; Walsh's secretary to S. A. Keenan, March 20, 1931; Walsh Papers, Personal.

²⁶ For information on his holdings and shifting investments see Walsh to P. B. Bartley, June 29, 1915; National Metropolitan Bank Folder **passim**; Walsh to S. McKennan, March 30, 1916; Walsh Papers, Personal. On the railroad stock see G. W. White to Walsh, July 5, 1916, and G. W. White to Walsh, January 9, 1917, Walsh Papers, Personal. On the Anaconda stock, which Walsh was preparing to sell in September, 1916, see Walsh to Miles Taylor (secretary), September 22, 1916; Walsh to G. W. White, November 7, 1916; and W. B. Hibbs and Co. to Walsh, November 22, 1916; Walsh Papers, Personal.

²⁷ John H. Perry to Walsh, January 31, 1924, and Walsh to John H. Perry, February 1, 1924, Walsh Papers, Personal.

²⁸ Walsh to William Wallace, Jr., February 25, 1914, Walsh Papers, Personal.

that the **Independent** does or says without being able in any effectual manner to control either."²⁰

Elinor McClements Walsh contributed much more than mere labor to her husband's success. The **Independent** said on the occasion of her death that she was "the dynamo behind Senator Walsh," and Mrs. Gudger agreed that her mother's opinion of him "spurred him on."²¹ She did not want him to run for any minor political office but "was willing for him to go to the Senate." Recognizing his abilities, she helped to convince him that they must not be wasted.

Montana did many good things for Tom Walsh. Among them, it cured him of the asthma with which he had been "somewhat sorely afflicted in Wisconsin,"²² and when he developed a fever for high public office it sent him away to be cured in Washington, D. C. The asthma cure came more easily than did the desk in the United States Senate, however. His interest in politics was nothing new. That this native of the Democratic town of Two Rivers and son of an Irish Democrat should join the Democratic party was only natural.²³ In Dakota he participated in the discussions over statehood and the division of the territory. Just arrived in Montana, he entered into the state capitol fight, traveling and speaking for Helena vs. Anaconda and learning much about Montana's people and resources in the process. As he reached the top of the legal profession his political appetite was whetted. In a practical sense each interest was an aid to the other.²⁴ Genuine sympathy for the forgotten man and hope for a reinvigoration of American democracy, as well as personal ambition, carried him into the din of political battle.

Until 1906 Walsh did not seek public office. In 1896 he was unanimously offered the Democratic nomination for judge of the district court, and although his election was virtually assured he declined the nomination, preferring his active law practice.²⁵ As Democratic candidate for Congress in 1906 he was unsuccessful, but he put himself on record as a progressive Democrat of real

²⁰ Walsh to Jerre C. Murphy, April 6, 1916, Walsh Papers, Personal.

²¹ Helena **Independent**, August 31, 1917, Mrs. Gudger interview.

²² Walsh to Catherine O'Keane, February 27, 1918, Walsh Papers, Personal.

²³ Schafer, **Wisconsin Magazine of History**, XXIII (June, 1940), 450-51. Walsh once wrote that human motivation was too complex for him to explain why he belonged to the Democratic party. Walsh to Adelaide Margaret Delaney, October 7, 1932, Walsh Papers, Personal.

²⁴ Mrs. Gudger interview. On the Montana capitol fight see C. B. Glasscock, **The War of the Copper Kings: Builders of Butte and Wolves of Wall Street** (Indianapolis, 1935), 120-130.

²⁵ Helena **Independent**, September 26, 1906.

abilities. In August, 1906, for example, he made a speech before the Montana Federation of Labor in favor of the initiative and referendum and the primary and urging action to prevent loss of life among railroad workers. He was hailed by the **Independent** as "the dominant figure" in a convention of Montana railroad shippers who met for the purpose of finding means to curb railroad injustices, and some believed him to be the principal architect of a comprehensive railroad act that passed the Montana legislature the following year.²⁵ One of his speeches in which he affirmed his progressive spirit and his faith in the Democratic party as the best instrument for reform was delivered when the Democratic state convention of 1906 unanimously elected him temporary chairman. He noted "the rising tide of democracy," the wonderful quickening of the "public conscience," and the way in which the limelight had been cast on "those faithless public servants who, though chosen as the people's representatives, have shown themselves . . . the mere instruments of great corporate interests which they serve. . . ." No important reform could be hoped for through the Republican party, he said, since it had "profited in its successes to such an extent by trust contributions . . . that it was intimately associated with special interests."²⁶ Two years after this speech Walsh was a delegate to the Democratic national convention at Denver to support the progressive William Jennings Bryan.²⁷

His big splash politically was a drive for the United States Senate in 1910-1911. On January 10, 1911, the Montana legislature started balloting to choose a successor to the conservative Republican Senator Thomas H. Carter. Carter and two Democrats, Walsh and W. G. Conrad, led. From January 10 until March 2, almost two months, the vote for these three varied only slightly, none getting a majority. At last the two Democrats withdrew in order that Judge Henry L. Myers, a relatively unknown Democrat, could get the combined vote and win over Senator Carter. Walsh was "delighted" with the results, he said, for he considered Myers a good man. Carter, who "had voted consistently against every reform demanded by the people, . . ."

²⁵ *Helena Independent*, August 22, 1906, and September 26, 1906, Walsh to E. G. Toomey, December 6, 1924, Walsh Papers, on the railroad act. Walsh acknowledged that many considered him the author of this act of 1907 although the credit was not really due him. See *Montana Laws 1907*, 68-86 and also 6-7.

²⁶ *Helena Independent*, September 21, 1906.

²⁷ Democratic National Convention, *Official Report of the Proceedings*, 1908. 74.

was at least defeated.³⁸ Some of those in the legislature who loyally supported Walsh, including his law partner C. B. Nolan, young attorney B. K. Wheeler, and Tom Stout of the Lewistown **Democrat-News**, remained his friends ever after. Walsh felt especially grateful to Wheeler, who lived in Butte and who defied the copper interests of Silver Bow County by his support. Said Walsh in retrospect: "I have always insisted that we had the brains and the character of the party with us in the great fight we made in 1911. It is worthy of note that none of those who proved recreant in that contest ever got very far, politically or otherwise."³⁹

In 1912 T. J. Walsh could not be denied. Highly respected personally, he profited most of all by being a progressive and a Democrat when the spirit of progressivism flamed highest and when the Democrats virtually were handed the election as a result of the Republican split. Progressivism among the rank and file voters aided Walsh as he rallied his forces for another fight in 1912. Incumbent Senator Joseph M. Dixon's term would expire at that time, affording Walsh another opportunity. The way to success was made easier by an act of the 1911 Montana legislature that provided in effect for popular election of Senators. Each party was to nominate its Senatorial candidate, who would then go on the ballot in the general election; and further, any candidate for the Montana legislature could in his county file one of two statements which was to be published, indicating 1) that he would vote for the popular choice or 2) that he would reserve his own judgment.⁴⁰ Under these new conditions Walsh passed the first barrier easily when he gained the Senatorial nomination by acclamation at the Democratic State Convention in Great Falls.⁴¹

Such strength shown by this Democratic liberal is rather puzzling, since the conservative corporate influences were not

³⁸ *Helena Independent*, January 11, 1911, *Montana Daily Record*, January 10, 1911, February 21, 1911, *Helena Independent*, March 3, 1911. For Walsh's opinion of Senator Carter see Walsh to A. E. Spriggs, September 10, 1918, Walsh Papers, Political.

³⁹ Walsh to I. S. McQuitty, November 17, 1922, Walsh Papers, Political. For Walsh's feeling of indebtedness to Wheeler and Stout see *Helena Independent*, October 26, 1920, and Walsh to B. K. Wheeler, June 13, 1922, Walsh Papers, Political. For Walsh's high estimate of services rendered him by C. B. Nolan, A. E. Spriggs, and Dave Browne see Walsh to J. T. Carroll, July 27, 1922, Walsh Papers, Political. Mrs. Gudger remarked that Wheeler risked his entire career by going against Anaconda as he did in 1910-11; Mrs. Gudger interview. See also Burton K. Wheeler interview and Senator James E. Murray interview, particularly on Anaconda opposition to Walsh. For an anti-Walsh account indicating the same alignment see *Helena Independent*, November 5, 1920.

⁴⁰ *Montana Laws* 1911, 120-24.

⁴¹ *Helena Independent*, August 30, 1912.

absent from the convention. Two comments by Walsh help to clarify the situation. He observed prior to the convention that if Democrats expected to win the campaign they must nominate Progressives. The regular Republicans had little chance because of their conservatism, unpopular at this time. And the Progressive party would have no *raison d'être* if Democrats were alert enough to run Progressives of their own political faith.⁴² The logic of this kind of argument apparently put Democratic conservatives under pressure momentarily to yield influence to their left wing in order to win the election. Another reason conservatives of the party were willing to tolerate him was stressed by Walsh: the Anaconda and William A. Clark forces wished to make sure that Progressive party candidate "Joe Dixon," chairman of Theodore Roosevelt's national committee, did not win another term in the Senate.⁴³

In November Walsh was a plurality winner over Dixon and the regular Republican candidate, so that his election was a certainty. On January 14, 1913, the Montana legislative assembly unanimously ratified the will of the people. A socialist legislator from Lincoln County was one of those who expressed the belief that Senator Walsh was unsurpassed in his qualifications for the place he had won.⁴⁴

Though Walsh in 1913 clearly was aligned with the liberals of his party in Montana, the future was to show the difficulty of maintaining this liberal position. Conservative influences of the state were powerful. The existence of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company, particularly, was a hard fact which no politician could overlook.⁴⁵

⁴² Walsh to A. J. Violette, Missoula, July 30, 1912, Walsh Papers, Personal. For information on the strategy employed by copper interests to influence Montana politics see Jerre C. Murphy, *The Comical History of Montana: A Serious Story for Free People* (San Diego, California, 1912), *passim*.

⁴³ Walsh to B. K. Wheeler, September 11, 1912, Walsh Papers, Personal.

⁴⁴ Helena *Independent*, November 9, 1912, *Montana Daily Record* (Helena), January 14, 1913.

⁴⁵ See for example Burton K. Wheeler to Walsh, November 9, 1912, and Walsh to Burton K. Wheeler, November 12, 1912, Walsh Papers, Personal. Wheeler congratulated Walsh on his victory and declared that this result had preserved his faith in the people. Walsh replied thanking Wheeler in the warmest terms for his backing in 1911 and since that time in spite of Anaconda's hostility. He added that he wished to talk with Wheeler as soon as possible about his "own rich desserts." Wheeler soon was awarded the job of United States attorney in Montana. By 1918, however, under conservative attack he was compelled to resign, although Walsh thought he had handled his job capably. See Walsh to Stephen J. Cowley, July 23, 1918, and Walsh to J. L. Dobell, November 22, 1918, Walsh Papers, Political.

Walsh's background of progressivism in Montana politics helped to prepare him for his new national career. He attended the special session of the Sixty-Third Congress on March 4, 1913, thus joining the Democratic hosts under Woodrow Wilson who within three years racked up an enviable legislative record. They engaged, said Walsh, "in the correction of hoary abuses, that gave color, if not substance, to the charge that ours was a capitalistic, not a democratic government."²² The Montanan did more than join the Senate. He took a "constant interest" in the proceedings, his colleague Senator Ashurst observed, and "had pronounced views on vital subjects."²³

Walsh subsequently explained that he had no intention "of cutting any figure" but soon discovered that few other Senators knew anything about the intricate problems of constitutional and international law that came before them. Gradually he was drawn into these matters because of his interest and some facility in the law and his "industry which never lacked exercise." After demonstrating his usefulness he was speedily involved in many matters.²⁴

Without false modesty and with accuracy, Senator Walsh thus explained his rise to fame. In Montana and the West he was known as a splendid lawyer; in the United States Senate he established the same reputation quickly. The elaborate care with which he prepared his legal cases presaged the elaborate care with which he prepared speeches for delivery in the Senate. His sympathy for the underprivileged in his home state made him an eager contributor to Wilson's New Freedom. Ambitious in Montana, Walsh remained so as a Senator; but his was an ambition to employ his fine legal talents in a high forum, an ambition for prestige and for service rather than for money and for power. Few men have arrived in the Senate possessing better equipment for public service than Walsh of Montana.

²² Walsh quoted in *Helena Independent*, October 29, 1918.

²³ Henry F. Ashurst interview.

²⁴ Walsh quoted in *Helena Independent*, August 3, 1924.

THE FLATHEAD APOSTASY: AN INTERPRETATION.

By Richard Forbis

The Flathead Indians first discovered the mysteries of Christianity through Iroquois trappers and canoemen who accompanied the earliest fur-traders into Montana. Some Iroquois, in particular those who resided in the vicinity of Caughnawaga Mission near Montreal, had long been subject to Jesuit preaching. Even so, their indoctrination in Catholicism was not complete; in fact, the evidence indicates that they had taken Christianity primarily as "good medicine." The Indians around Montreal were desired by the Northwest Company for their dual abilities as trappers and canoemen, and also because they were readily available. However, they were fickle and indolent, and they frequently deserted the Company's expeditions in order to remain among the Indians of the Rocky Mountains, where they were well-treated and highly respected.¹ It was in this manner that four Iroquois and one itinerant white came to live with the Flathead tribe sometime in the second or third decade of the nineteenth century.² One of these Iroquois, Big Ignace, was the most influential in converting the Flathead to Catholicism, according to Father Gregory Mengarini.

Big Ignace especially may be considered to be the first whom God made use of to dissipate the thick darkness which up to that time had enveloped the minds of our Indians. His words, reinforced by very virtuous behavior (this latter being a thing quite difficult, I should almost say impossible to find among whites who live with the Indians), made a breach in the hearts of several, especially among the older ones, who spent not only days but sometimes entire nights in the tent of this precursor, as I may call him, in order to hear him talk of God, religion, and especially baptism. Then it was that the Flatheads heard of certain white men clothed in black whose practice it was to instruct people, bring them to know God and all good things, and enable them to live after death. Every time he spoke to the Indians (so old Gerve told me recently) he would finish by saying, "what I tell you is nothing compared with what the black robes (robe nere) know." Ignace would

¹ Alexander Ross, *Fur Hunters of the Far West*. (London, 1885) 1, 295.

² Gregory Mengarini, *Memoria delle Missioni delle Teste Piatte, 1848*, in Gilbert J. Garraghan, *The Jesuits of the Middle United States*. (New York, 1938) II, 238-239.

not teach the Indians any prayers, as he was asked to do, for fear, as he said, "of changing the word of God."³

Ignace offered only an appetizer, but he inspired the Flathead with a zeal to learn more of Christianity. Since the Iroquois did not understand Christianity well enough to give the Flathead a comprehensive picture, the only recourse of the Flathead was to seek the priests themselves. In 1831 the Indians sent their first delegation to St. Louis. Of the four Indians who began this journey, only one returned, and he reported the failure of the mission. The second party, which left in 1835, consisted of Old Ignace (Big Ignace) and his sons, Charles and Francois (Saxa). Unlike the first group, the second was able to communicate the desires of the Flathead. However, the priests did not come, so the Flathead tried again in 1837. The third expedition, of which Big Ignace again was a member, never reached St. Louis. All were killed by Sioux. The fourth delegation consisted of Peter Gaucher and Young Ignace. They reached St. Louis in 1839 and extracted a promise from Bishop Rosati to have a priest live among them.⁴

Bishop Rosati selected Father Pierre-Jean de Smet, a capable and energetic young Jesuit priest, to answer the call of the Indians. Less than one year after the last Flathead delegation arrived in St. Louis, Father de Smet met a Flathead committee on the Green River, in the present state of Wyoming. This was June 30, 1840. The Flathead party led him into the main camp at Pierre's Hole, where de Smet found also the Pend d'Orielle tribe and a sizeable portion of the Nez Perce tribe.

Father de Smet was astonished to find that Christianity had already taken a strong grip on the Flathead. He noted that "The Flatheads had already for some years a custom of never breaking camp on Sunday, but of passing that day in devotional exercises."⁵ That the Flathead were firmly convinced of the efficacy of prayer is sufficiently demonstrated by Ferris's observation in the early 1830's that the Flathead never ate, drank, or slept without giving thanks to God.⁶ While these are the only specific examples of what the Flathead accepted from Christian practice in those early days,

³ *Ibid.*, II, 241. Old Gerve, J. B. Gervais, was the white man who joined the Flatheads with Big Ignace and his three Iroquois companions.

⁴ Lawrence B. Palladino, *Indian and White in the Northwest*. (Lancaster, 1922) 25-28.

⁵ Hiram M. Chittenden and A. T. Richardson, *Life, Letters, and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean de Smet, S. J., 1801-1873*. (New York, 1905) I, 230-231.

⁶ Paul C. Phillips, (ed.), *Life in the Rocky Mountains* by Warren Angus Ferris. (Denver, 1940) 89.

the Indians are also more generally thought to have "conformed, as nearly as they could, to our creed and manners, and even to our religious practices."⁷

Two facets of Christianity particularly appealed to the Flathead. First, they were inordinately attracted to the sign of the cross. De Smet explained that they regarded this as a pledge of victory.⁸ Second, they contorted the concept of baptism. Apparently they did not see the symbolic significance of baptism, or if they did they held it to be of secondary importance. Instead, they felt that "when [they received] baptism, they . . . [could] conquer any enemy whatsoever."⁹ It would seem that the Flathead did not emphasize these two aspects of Christianity in order to facilitate their entry into the Kingdom of God; they were more interested in using the force of Christianity to defeat their enemies and to preserve themselves. Their interests in the priests were of the same order. De Smet himself admits that the Indians wanted the black robes, "Because they think that all other imaginable blessings will come with them; not only courage to fight, but also every species of remedy to enable them to enjoy corporeal health."¹⁰

De Smet's friendly reception by the Flathead, and their docile acceptance of his dictums, encouraged him to believe that Flathead conversion to Catholicism would be quick and sure. With the idea of obtaining more help, Father de Smet returned to St. Louis in the fall of 1840. In 1841, Fathers Mengarini and Point accompanied de Smet to the Bitter Root valley, where they, with the assistance of two lay brothers, built St. Mary's Mission. During the next five years, the priests were well pleased with the success of their labors and sacrifices. They made steady progress in converting the Indians to Catholicism. There were a few changes in personnel. Father Anthony Ravalli joined the mission in 1845. Aside from such minor interruptions, however, the work proceeded smoothly. Then, in 1846, relations between the Jesuits and the Flathead disintegrated.

The Indians left that year for their customary summer hunt. They were then on the best of terms with the missionaries.¹¹ However, when the Indians returned in the fall, they revealed a com-

⁷ Chittenden and Richardson, *op. cit.*, I, 289-290.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 593.

⁹ *Ibid.*, III, 952-953.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 953

¹¹ Mengarini, quoted in de Smet a Nobill, May 25, 1850, in Garraghan, *op. cit.*, II, 376.

plete change of attitude. In a pathetic letter to Roothan, Father Ravalli described the condition in these words:

... we were not a little astonished when on their approaching this reduction last fall, their camp, which was broken up in various bands, took different courses. Part of the Indians were unwilling or afraid to come up to their village, while the others on entering the village took up again their old-time barbarous yells, which had not been heard since we came among them. They gave a chilly salute to the missionaries and then drew off with their lodges far from the latter nor did they show themselves to the priest except rarely and then only to smoke in his cabin. They sold us grudgingly a little dry meat and that of the worst quality. We heard a little later that on Father de Smet's departure from their hunting-camp to descend the Missouri they had given themselves up to their old war-dances, to savage obscenity and to shameless excesses of the flesh . . . We know that we were not to blame for such a change and we bewailed it all the more when we saw that they went on constantly getting worse.¹²

This passage reveals that de Smet's departure from St. Mary's to the east had something to do with the Indian's dissatisfaction. For one thing, the mission would now be under the supervision of Mengarini, whose zeal outweighed his common sense. Mengarini was not popular with the Indians, partly because of his lack of tact, partly because in previous times he had sheltered and protected some predatory Blackfeet.¹³ Another thing disturbed the Indians. It seems probable that they were deeply hurt by the removal of the man who first brought orthodox Christianity to them. De Smet held the Flathead in the highest esteem, and they very likely reciprocated this sentiment.

The fact that de Smet was to leave and Mengarini to replace him, however, could hardly account for the hostility of the Indians toward the other missionaries. There was a far more important incident, connected with de Smet's departure, which aroused the anger and resentment of the Flathead. Before he left them, de Smet discussed in the presence of both Blackfeet and Flathead, the possibility of christianizing the Blackfeet. This, in the Flathead eyes, was treason. Although de Smet had lived with the Flathead for five years, he apparently did not appreciate the fact that the Indians were not particularly interested in the moral and non-material aspects of Christianity; they were primarily concerned with its protective powers. Consequently,

¹² Ravalli, in *Ravalli a Roothan*, June 29, 1847, in *ibid.*, 376-377.

¹³ Albert J. Partoll, (ed), "Mengarini's Narrative of the Rockies," *Sources of Northwest History* No. 25. Reprinted from *Frontier and Midland*, 1938, XVIII: 8 and 17.

when the Flathead discovered that de Smet was as willing to baptize their mortal enemies the Blackfeet as he had been to clothe the Flathead in the armor of Christianity, they revolted. For when they alone had Christianity, they were almost uniformly successful in repelling the attacks of the huge Blackfoot tribes. "Indeed," wrote de Smet, "their unbounded confidence in the god of battle is well rewarded; a truth which the enemies of the Flatheads invariably acknowledge. The medicine of the Black Robes . . . is strongest of all."¹⁴ But when the two tribes were on equal terms, there seemed little doubt but that the Flathead would be exterminated. This was one of the goals of the Blackfeet and their superior numbers plus the power of baptism made their achievement of this goal seem likely.

However fallacious this reasoning may appear to a white man, when he understands that the Flathead accepted Christianity as a religion which was invested with superior power, he can understand why the Indians were anxious to maintain their monopoly of it. In the case of the Flathead, to control Christianity was to control their means of survival. In the of de Smet's promiscuous proselytizing, Flathead resentment and hostility toward the priests and toward Christianity is meaningful.

There is no way to tell exactly how long the antagonism of the Indians toward the priests lasted. Probably the Indians discarded their haughty and overbearing manner shortly after they assumed it. At any rate, in 1848 they were again on good terms with the missionaries, although they again broke with the priests in the winter of 1848-1849. Again the wound healed rapidly, at least superficially, and in 1849 Father Ravalli was able to write:

"At present the Indians are well-affected toward our holy religion and toward us."¹⁵

In 1850, however, the situation had reversed itself again, and Ravalli wrote that:

The majority gave up "private prayer" and vented insult and injury every day upon the missionary. Though we were making sacrifices for their sick even so far as to deprive ourselves of a morsel of bread, they refused to sell us necessary provisions while under our very eyes they sold to an agent of the Hudson Bay Company.¹⁶

Why the Flathead again revolted against the ways of the Jesuits is a problem which cannot be solved until further evi-

¹⁴ Chittenden and Richardson, *op. cit.*, II, 573.

¹⁵ Ravalli, in Ravalli a Roothan, April 5, 1849, in Garraghan, *op. cit.*, II, 378.

¹⁶ Ravalli, in Ravalli a Roothan, April 5, 1851, in *ibid.*, II, 380.

dence comes to light. Very likely, they had never completely recovered from the blow they suffered in 1846 and, once having made a break, found it easier to revolt again. Then too, they probably grew more disillusioned with Christianity as time passed. Father Accolti, Superior of Missions at the time, told of several erroneous ideas which had poisoned the minds of the Flathead against the Jesuits. First, when Ravalli failed to heal a sick Indian, no matter in what condition the patient arrived, Ravalli was blamed for his death. This corroborated the belief that the Jesuits were scheming to kill all the Indians so that the Jesuits could assume ownership of the land. In other quarters some Indians felt that the priests had not been able to make a living elsewhere, so they came west to sponge off the Indians. Father Accolti traced these poisonous thoughts directly to Angus McDonald, a Hudson's Bay Company trader.¹⁷ Mengarini, appointed to head St. Mary's Mission after de Smet left, assigned two more reasons for the shift in the Indian's attitude. First, he said, Little Faro, an Indian of some influence, damaged the reputation of Mengarini and other Catholic priests when Mengarini failed to support him in his attempt to become head chief. Second, Mengarini felt that all the good Indians were dying off.¹⁸ It is true that many of those who greeted de Smet in 1840 had passed on. From Mengarini's remark, it is apparent that the younger generation was not so quick to follow the dictates of the priests.

The apostasy of 1850 was far more serious than the schism between the priests and their pupils in 1846. Instead of sulking in their tents, as they had done earlier, the Indians in 1850 reverted to their ancient mode of entertainment, the night "orgy," and practiced customs which the fathers expressly forbade.¹⁹ Also, they remained around the mission so little that the priests felt their continued efforts were useless. Consequently, Father Joset, under orders from Father Accolti, leased St. Mary's Mission to John Owen. In the hope that the mission could soon be reopened, the fathers left St. Mary's shortly after the lease was signed, in the fall of 1850. The priests closed St. Mary's in retaliation for inconsiderate treatment by the Indians. Their intention was "to punish [the Flathead] and bring them to a sense of duty."²⁰ When St. Mary's closed, the first chapter of Montana missionary history ended. The Jesuits had lost the first round.

¹⁷ Accolti, in *Accolti a de Smet*, May 5, 1851, in *ibid.*, II, 382-383.

¹⁸ Mengarini, *Woodstock Letters*, 18:148 et. seq., in *ibid.*, II, 378.

¹⁹ Accolti, in *Accolti a de Smet*, May 5, 1851, in *ibid.*, II, 382-383.

²⁰ Mengarini, *Woodstock Letters*, 18:149, 152, in *ibid.*, II, 379-380.



W. F. Russell

EDGERTON AND LINCOLN

Edited by Anne McDonnell

Akron, Ohio, May 23rd, 1892

Judge William H. Hunt¹

Helena, Montana

Dear Sir:—

I am in receipt of your letter asking some questions relating to the organization of Montana Territory. I most willingly comply with your request and will give you such facts as I can recall from the long-ago, depending entirely upon my memory. The paper you sent me, I regret has not come to hand, as it may quicken my somewhat dormant intellect.

When I arrived in Bannock in the fall of 1863, I found a country so vast, intersected by streams and mountain ranges and sparsely populated, that government seemed impossible. The difficulty was apparent to many beside myself. No formal meeting was held as I now remember, but it was frequently talked of and finally agreed that an effort should be made for a division of the territory. Among those most active in the movement I remember Gov. Houser (sic)² Senator Sanders,³ Mr. Langford,⁴ Mr. Chris-

¹ William H. Hunt (1858-1949) was first judge of the first judicial district of Montana. He had formerly been attorney general of the territory. In 1900 he was appointed Governor of Puerto Rico by President McKinley. Theodore Roosevelt subsequently appointed him district judge of the United States court for the district of Montana.

² Samuel T. Hauser (1833-1914) arrived in Montana in 1862. From that date until his death in 1914 he was active in the economic and political affairs of Montana. He was one of the "big four" in the Democratic party (S. T. Hauser, Marcus Daly, C. A. Broadwater and W. A. Clark) and was appointed governor of Montana territory by Grover Cleveland in 1885. He served until 1887. He owned and operated banks, stock ranches, mines, railroads and hydro-electric plants.

³ Wilbur Fisk Sanders (1834-1905) came to Montana in 1863 with his uncle, Sidney Edgerton, chief justice of Idaho territory. Colonel Sanders was one of the organizers of the Vigilantes and acted as prosecuting attorney at the trial of the road agents. He was one of the leaders of the Republican party in Montana. He was elected to the United States Senate from Montana in 1890.

⁴ Nathaniel P. Langford (1832-1911) came to Montana from Minnesota with the Fisk expedition of 1862. He served as Collector of Internal Revenue from 1864 to 1868, was a member of the Yellowstone expedition of 1870 and served as first superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. He returned to Minnesota in 1875.

man,⁶ Mr. Miller⁷ and Dr. Thompson.⁸ Many others were more or less active. I was selected to go to Washington to urge the matter upon Congress; my selection was undoubtedly due to the fact, that I had been a member of Congress,⁹ and was acquainted with the old members and President Lincoln.

I started in the forepart of January, 1864 and rode on horseback to Salt Lake Valley, not a pleasant trip, I assure you at that time of year. The snow made a very comfortable resting place nights, but over the divides it was slightly frigid. In something over two weeks, I reached the first Mormon settlement and about midnight heard a Mormon dog bark. I thought of Byron's "'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark'", although he did not "deep mouthed welcome", but barked at me as though I were a veritable gentile. But I felt as St. Paul did, when he saw his brethren approach at the three Taverns, thanked God and took courage. When I got to Washington, I found I had a heavy task before me. The war debt was already enormous, and members naturally feared to add to it by creating a new Territory, and what is now Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, were about as little known as the dark continent. What did people care for the unknown land, the far away desert country, when "Stern Visaged War" was shaking the country with the throes of dissolution. It required time and patience, but I had taken with me gold dust and gold nuggets, which I flourished gracefully, and incessantly before their covetous eyes and soon got their ears—for gold **always** attracted the fallen Sons of Adam and especially in such a mercenary age as ours. There is one thing I did, that has weighed on my conscience to this time, and judge I might as well make you my Father Confessor and have done with it. After I had been in Washington, perhaps two months, Dr. Thompson called, being on his way to Massachusetts on a visit; he brought with

⁶ George Chrisman or Crisman was a merchant in Bismarck, 1863-64. He was appointed first county commissioner of Beaverhead County, Idaho territory in 1864. In 1873 he was interested in mines in French Guiana. Little else is known of him.

⁷ Lucius C. Miller was a resident of Bannock in 1862-63 and a member of the first legislature of Idaho territory from Beaverhead county, 1863-64.

⁸ Francis M. Thompson (1833-1916) was a resident of Montana from 1862 until 1865 when he returned to Massachusetts. He was a member of Montana's first territorial legislature. He designed the territorial seal from which the present state seal was adapted.

⁹ Sidney Edgerton (1818-1900) was a member of Congress from Ohio (1856-1863). He was appointed first chief justice of Idaho territory in 1863. Reached Bannock on September 17, 1863. He was appointed first governor of Montana territory, June 27, 1864. Returned to Ohio in September, 1865.

him a large chunk of gold, as clean and bright as gold could be made. I got him to leave it with me till his return. I took it into the House of Representatives, awhile before it was called to order and laid it on the desk, where I used to sit. The members flocked around me to see it and men and women in the galleries rose up and peered at it, and I passed it off as a nugget, when in fact a retort had broken and let the gold into the ashes. It was a good enough nugget for them.

I reached Washington in the forepart of February; I had many interviews with Gov. Ashley,⁹ who was a strong supporter of the Bill and as chairman of the Committee on Territories, had a great influence. At one time the bill depended on the casting vote of the Speaker, Mr. Colfax;¹⁰ (sic) he voted for it and saved it.

The committee on territories were at first for placing the western line of the Territory along the Rocky Range; over this we had a fierce struggle. I finally got the delegate from Idaho, Mr. Wallace,¹¹ to go with me before the Committee and urge the line as finally established. It was unfortunate for Wallace, I regret to say, for it caused his defeat at the next election. All or nearly all the western Senators favored the bill, but Senator Wade¹² of Ohio was probably the most active in its support. I had a number of interviews with President Lincoln; he was earnestly in favor of the bill. I remember when I called on him the first time, and showed him the fine gold and nuggets; he looked at them carefully and in his way of apparently talking to himself, said "Talk about bankrupting this country; it can't be done, it can't be done. There is gold enough in the Rocky Mountains to pay off our national debt in three years, if we could get it out."

As soon as the bill passed I left Washington. My friends urged me to stay. I had been five months from my family, go I would and go I did.

I first heard of my appointment at Salt Lake, just as I was getting into the coach for Montana. Why I was appointed, I do not know; there were twenty applicants waiting, watching, hop-

⁹ James M. Ashley (1842-1896) was a member of Congress from Ohio (1859-1869) and governor of Montana territory (1869-1870).

¹⁰ Schuyler Colfax (1823-1885) was a member of Congress from Indiana, (1855-1869) and served as vice president under Grant (1869-1873).

¹¹ William H. Wallace (1811-1879), a delegate to Congress from Washington territory (1861-1863), was appointed first governor of Idaho territory in 1863. He was elected to Congress from Idaho territory (1864-1865).

¹² Benjamin F. Wade (1800-1878) was a member of Congress from Ohio (1851-1869).

ing, expecting. I hardly expected it, as one Senator had filed a written protest against my appointment for the simple reason, that I had called him a d——d fool. I told the President, that I thought so, and wouldn't take it back for any office in his gift, and if he couldn't give me the appointment, there were plenty of good men anxious for it, and that I would do as old Dorshimer said he would do. At that Lincoln rose up and said "What is that, what is that? I know old Dorshimer." I then told him the story.

Dorshimer was a wealthy German and owned the National Hotel at Buffalo. He was a candidate for Canal Commissioner before the Democratic convention at Utica and expected the nomination, but on the first ballot he was beaten out of sight. As soon as he saw how it had gone, he jumped up and says: "Shentlemens, I goes back to Puffalo and keeps tavern like hell." I said good-by Mr. President and left him laughing at old Dorsheimer's speech. That was the last I ever saw of Lincoln.

There was another man, who aided me greatly, old Thad Stevens;¹¹ his knowledge of the country was marvelous, and his power in the House excelled any other person's. He seemed to see the future greatness of that country, and comprehended the necessities of the situation.

I arrived at my house on the 4th of July. If there is anything in this rambling epistle, that will be of any use to you, I shall be glad, if not, you can give it to the flames.

Most respectfully yours,

SIDNEY EDGERTON.

P.S.—Will you please send me a copy of your lecture.

S.E.

¹¹ Thaddeus Stevens (1792-1868) was a member of Congress from Pennsylvania (1849-1853 and 1859-1868).

A JOURNEY TO BENTON

Introduction

Thomas Francis Meagher, whose letter to Father P. J. de Smet follows, wrote shortly before he left on the trip he here describes, "nothing delights me so much as being on horseback and taking long, rough and adventurous journeys."¹ The exuberance with which, in this letter, he describes his trip from Helena to Fort Benton in the late fall of 1865, lends credence to his statement. But then, exuberance was very much a part of Meagher's nature.

At the time of his journey to Benton Meagher was forty-three years old. Emotional, alternately truculent and charming he had been ceaselessly involved in trouble and contention and was driven by restlessness and ambition. "I am resolved" he remarked in 1865, "not to turn my back on the Rocky Mountains until I have the means to whip my carriage and four through the New York Central Park, and sail my own yacht, with the Green Flag at the Mizzenpeak, within three miles of the Irish coast."²

Meagher had always been on the edge of greatness, but had never really tasted it. He had escaped the gibbet in Ireland by the narrowest of margins when he was but twenty-five, he had suffered exile to Van Dieman's land, he had been a revolutionary, an editor, attorney and politician. At thirty-eight he led an Irish Brigade to destruction at Fredericksburg, at forty-two he was appointed acting governor of Montana Territory, at forty-three he died mysteriously in the swirling waters of the Missouri river. Like the young west to which he came he was often bellicose, always restless, but his enthusiasm and optimism were unbounded. Nothing represents these latter characteristics better than the rolling prose of his letter to Father de Smet.

It is probable that this is the "lost" letter to which Father de Smet referred when, writing subsequently to Meagher, he said: "Your long and interesting letter on Rocky Mountain missions, I sent to Very Reverend Father Weld, Provincial of the Society of Jesus in England. . . I confided it to the care of a friend on his way to Europe together with several letters of my own. . . I learned a few days ago that they did not reach their respective addresses."³

¹ R. G. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher: An Irish Revolutionary in America* (University of Colorado Press, 1949) 155.

² *Ibid.*, 154.

³ Chittenden and Richardson, *Father de Smet's Life and Travels Among the North American Indians*, Vol. IV (De Smet to Meagher, November 6, 1886) 1526.

In any event the letter next turned up some thirty-six years later in an Irish periodical, the *Irish Monthly*,⁴ a copy of which found its way to the National Library of Ireland in Dublin. Eighty-six years after the letter was written, it came back to its point of origin via photostat from Ireland.

Editor.

Executive Office, Virginia City,
December 15th, 1865

My Dear Father de Smet,

Nothing, however trivial, that concerns the Indians of this region, or that serves to keep alive your affectionate and solicitous recollection of them can fail, I believe, to be otherwise than gratifying to you. This being my belief, I take a sheet of paper and a goose-quill pen, the only description of pen I can write comfortably with, to give you, in a familiar way, an account of my recent visit to Fort Benton, and what I saw, learned and experienced on the road.

The Secretary of the Interior having instructed Major Upson, the agent for the Blackfeet,¹ to negotiate a treaty with that nation, I considered it my duty, as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Territory, to proceed to the fort, that being the place designated for the consideration of the treaty.² Accordingly I set out one day, about the middle of last month, for Benton, from the new city of Helena (every collection of log huts is called a city in this ambitious country), which, fortunately for its future interests, is situated, approximately speaking, in the centre of the most promising and prosperous of the mining camps, and settlements of our territory. It is equally distant (thirty miles or so) from the rich gulches and placer diggings of the Big Black Foot, on the western slope of the main range of the Rocky Mountain, and thus close to, and in the neighborhood of, Diamond city, in the Belt Mountains, across the Missouri.

⁴ *Irish Monthly*, September, 1902.

¹ Gad E. Upson, special Indian Commissioner at Fort Benton.

² Meagher was acting governor in the absence of Sidney Edgerton and as such was Superintendent of Indian Affairs, *ex officio*. By 1865 Meagher, who had sought the governorship since his appointment as acting governor, had about given up hope and was petitioning President Johnson for a permanent appointment to the separate position of Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Montana Territory, because, he said, since the superintendent to do his job properly, must be constantly in the saddle, he would find the job "far more in consonance with my predilections than either the Secretaryship or Governorship." See Athearn, *op. cit.*, 155.

The diggings of the Big Prickly Pear, the washings of Silver creek, too, and several other very valuable deposits of one kind or another lie within an hour's ride, or a little more, of this precocious city of Helena. Besides which, the city itself is intersected by Last Chance creek, on which hundreds of miners are at work, and from which hundreds of thousands of dollars have been taken in less than a year, for it is not a full twelve months yet since the gold indications were detected here by a forlorn adventurer who, failing in his search after the metal at various other points, determined to make a last effort on this creek, and hence the name it bears.

It was a very beautiful day the day I started from Helena, to meet Indians in solemn council for the first time. Late as it was in the year, the sky was not only cloudless, but dazzlingly bright. Not a speck or streak of snow was visible on the mountains, which, encircling and over topping Helena, reared their great forms in the glistening air, and stood there, in the boldest and grandest outline, the sentinels of the scene. It was a mid-summer day on the threshold of the winter—a bride in her joy, her beauty, and her jewels, on the verge of the grave.

A pleasant party of gentlemen set out with me. There was Judge Munson, an Associate-Judge of the United States District Court of Montana;³ Mr. Wood, Sheriff of Edgerton County, of which Helena is the county-seat;⁴ Mr. Hedges, a young lawyer doing a good business in that place;⁵ and Mr. Malcolm Clark, formerly agent at Fort Benton for the American Fur Company,

³ Judge Lyman E. Munson. See Munson's own account of the journey to Benton included in Historical Society of Montana, *Contributions*, Vol. V, 1904, 214-218.

⁴ George J. Wood came to Montana from Illinois in 1864. It was at a public meeting held in Wood's cabin on October 30, 1864, that Helena was given its name. He was one of the three commissioners empowered to lay out the streets, fix the size of town lots and establish the necessary regulations for obtaining and holding same. He was subsequently chosen Recorder and Sheriff. See *Contributions*, Vol. II, 1896, 110. The Edgerton County referred to above was created Feb. 2, 1865. The name was changed to Lewis and Clark County, Dec. 20, 1867.

⁵ Cornellius Hedges, graduate of Harvard law school, arrived in Montana in 1864. In 1865 he was appointed United States District Attorney and later in Helena he held the office of probate judge of Lewis and Clark County. In 1872 he was appointed Territorial Superintendent of Schools and was thereafter intimately associated with the development of educational institutions in Montana. For Hedge's account of the journey to Benton, see *Rocky Mountain Magazine*, October 1900, 155-58.

and one of the oldest residents of the territory.⁶ Mr. Wood had served as a lieutenant of artillery in Sherman's army, and distinguished himself in most of the operations on the Mississippi which terminated in the surrender of Vicksburg. Mr. Clark had been educated for the military service at the National Academy at West Point, but resigning his commission many years ago, had taken to a pioneer life among the Rocky Mountains, long even before California had sprung into an American existence.

This highly intelligent and adventurous gentleman owns a fine **ranch** on the Little Prickly Pear, some twenty-five miles from Helena, several acres of which is under excellent cultivation, but the greater portion of which is devoted to, as it is exclusively adapted for, cattle-raising. Mr. Clark owns some of the very best horses in Montana. What will please and interest you a good deal more, he is, and has always been, a sincere and active friend of the Jesuit Fathers, and holds them in the highest esteem and confidence. His wife is a Piegan. His eldest daughter—a singularly amiable and very prepossessing young lady in appearance—was educated at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Cincinnati.⁷ He naturally, as well as by the force of his character and his long and intimate association with the Piegans, exercises great influence with them and the Blackfeet generally.

It was at his **ranch** we dismounted the first evening of our journey. The horses being turned loose, our saddles and blankets brought in and disposed as couches, we ourselves, soon after, sat down to partake of an abundant supper, including champagne, to which our host seemed truly glad to invite us, and over which the young lady, just mentioned, very gracefully presided.

Rising early the next day, we ascended and then descended the great Medicine Rock Hill, then ascended and descended Lyons Hill,⁸ no less steep and arduous, and, having struck the foot of that, galloped along through the narrow and circuitous valley of the Little Prickly Pear to Paul Vermet's, on the Dearborn river.⁹

⁶ Malcolm Clarke, after his retirement from the service of the American Fur Company, settled in the Prickly Pear Valley near Helena. Here he lived with a Piegan woman, daughter of a chief, who bore him five children. Clarke was killed by the Piegans on August 18, 1869. This tragedy led to the so-called Piegan War of 1869-70. For sketch of Clarke see *Contributions*, Vol. II, 1896, 255-268. Though Meagher spells it Clark, it is properly spelled Clarke.

⁷ Helen P. Clarke, born about 1844 at the mouth of the Judith River, died Glacier Park, Montana, 1923.

⁸ Lyon's Hill in Prickly Pear Canyon was named after James P. Lyon who was accidentally killed by the discharge of his own rifle at that place on May 12, 1862.

⁹ In the autumn of 1864, Paul Vermet had opened a station at the crossing of the Dearborn River, some thirty miles north of the county seat.

This valley of the Little Prickly Pear is strikingly and peculiarly beautiful. Winding in a numerous succession of curves between the abrupt spurs of the mountains on the left, and the high rocky banks of the river on the right, it is crowded with willow-trees, and shadowed, whilst it is beautified, by the more matured and heavily-foiled pines and cedars that rustle above it on both sides. Another road, coursing along the spurs referred to this moment, elevates you several feet from the level of the valley, and relieves you from the necessity of crossing the Little Prickly Pear oftener than twice. But it is an exceedingly rough and stony road, and is only used, generally speaking, when the river is so full as to flood the bottom, and render it vexatious to the wagon-trains. Taking the lower road, however, you have to cross the Little Prickly Pear not less than eighteen times. With this we found no fault, since it kept our horses cool, and refreshingly varied the dusty monotony of what otherwise was a parched road of red and gravelly clay, occasionally broken by small muddy pools and decaying trunks and limbs of trees.

Ascending to the rolling prairie from Wolf creek, which unites with the Little Prickly Pear a mile and a half above the point at which the latter plunges, with a thousand sparkles and a deep breast of water, into the Missouri, we encountered the first serious intimations we received since our leaving Helena that it was not the midsummer we were journeying in, but a short spell of exceptional good-humor with which the harsher season had, through mistake or caprice, pleasantly favoured us. The sky grew dim, though faintly so, the outlines of the mountains to the left of our road gradually lost their sharpness and decision, the lazy boughs of the pines and cedars, which we were now leaving behind us, began to stir gently with a swaying motion, whilst far off, in the deep crevices of the mountains, and down from their darkening summits the wind might be heard gathering in audible but hoarse crescendo for a deafening outburst. It was at its height and its broadest volume by the time we reached Paul Vermet's.

Paul is a French Canadian: he was for a long time, though to-day a young man of a sprightly brain and handsome features, a trapper, trader, hunter and everything else a Frenchman can be in a wild country, on the Red River of the north, and with no little pride considers himself, as he is acknowledged to be, the proprietor of the best station on the road between Fort Benton and Helena. A masterly cook, his kitchen is kept well supplied with game—antelope, elk, mountain sheep, and the like—thanks to the industry, activity, sharp wits, sure hand, and fatal eye of

a Piegan Indian, who alternates for his food, sanctuary, and society, between Paul's *ranche* and the mission of St. Ignatius—the distance between the two attractive points being five-and-twenty miles at least.¹⁰

The name of this Indian is Iron, and he is a tough and trenchant man, whose make and texture vindicate his name. The expression of his large and handsome features is that of a frank, faithful, and soldierly nature. Standing fully six feet high, his vigorous frame is admirably proportioned, and that he is as strong and elastic as he looks, the spoils he accumulates from the chase furnish the most acceptable evidence. A confirmed Catholic, Iron wears the scapular and beads, is devotional as well as upright, and warmly attached to the Fathers of the neighboring mission. Touched with a strange antipathy to his own people, he seldom goes among them, infinitely preferring, as he declares, to live with the Whites, and especially with the Fathers.

Paul Vermet's huge cotton-wood fire, crackling and blazing up a broad and deep-set chimney, as well as Paul's rich stew of mountain sheep and unctuous coffee, were in delightful contrast to the wind which fiercely beat without, the rent and raging sky, the swollen river, which swept by his door so cold and white, and the snow which already began to fall rapidly in heavy flakes all over the landscape as far as your eyes could range or penetrate. After dinner I stretched myself upon my buffalo-robe, my saddle serving as a pillow; and, having lit my pipe, yielded myself in a luxurious rest to the visions and melodies of Shakespeare's "Tempest" which glorious work of the world's greatest dramatist I turned to almost instinctively as the storm thickened round us, on receiving from Paul a befouled and ragged copy of Shakespeare's Plays. The balance of the party—as we say in America—took their seats at a little round table, covered with a bright red cloth, and furthermore embellished with a fat dusky candle, which spluttered as often as it sparkled. I had not got half-way through the first scene of the first act of the "Tempest," before the grave and learned judge, the keen artilleryman, the studious and promising young lawyer, Paul Vermet, and Mr. Clark himself, enveloped in powerful tobacco-smoke, were absorbed and profoundly lost in the mystery of some game

¹⁰ Meagher here refers not to St. Ignatius mission in the Flathead but to St. Peter's mission or the "Old Mission" located on the north bank of the Missouri opposite the mouth of Deep Creek. In the fall of 1865 this mission was in process of being moved to a location on St. John's Creek some five miles south of Bird-Tail station. This "Old Mission" however, was not finally abandoned until the spring of 1866.

at cards, said to be irresistibly popular on the boats of the lower Mississippi.

Whilst at breakfast the next morning, we were surprised by a party of six gentlemen on their way from Fort Benton to Helena, who had started that morning from the Government farm on Sun River, and had pushed bravely on to Dearborn, in defiance of the storm, and all the discomforts and dangers it threatened. They recommended us to stay where we were until the storm blew over and not to venture to the mission, which we proposed to make our next halting place on our road to Benton. The mission I refer to here is the new mission of St. Peter's, so called since it was on the Feast of St. Peter's that Father Kuppens dedicated it to the missionary purposes of your generous and heroic Order.²¹ Distant something over five-and-twenty miles from the old mission of St. Ignatius, it is not more than ten or twelve miles at most distant from Paul Vermet's by a short cut over two or three hills, which Iron was prepared to show us.

The new comers vainly besought us to remain and entertain them for the day; in vain did they appeal to our companionable dispositions, equally in vain did they appeal to our fears. What they had done, we at least could attempt, and their hardihood and bravery were too stimulating for us not to emulate them at all risks. By noon, our courageous resolution planted us in our saddles, carried us up to the spurs, through the freezing current of the Dearborn, and right into the blinding elements that hid the plains and hills beyond. I was the last of the gallant company who took to the water, and as I stood on the bank in the very partial shelter of a withered and whitened tree, watching my companions as they stemmed the tide in single file, and then, one by one, emerged from the river on to the shingly beach right opposite to me, I could not but heartily laugh and shout out my merriment at the grotesque and dismal appearance they one and all presented in strong relief against the dense and driving snow.

Each of these sturdy horsemen had his legs, up to the knee-caps, encased in leathers tied with thongs, the ends of which dangled about his calves and ankles in what might be taken to be

²¹ Cornelius Hedges in his account (see footnote 5) calls the new mission St. John's. It was, however, dedicated as St. Peter's and was subsequently known as such, though often called the "New Mission" to distinguish it from the old location opposite Deep Creek.

Father Francis Xavier Kuppens came to Montana and St. Peter's mission in November, 1864. He was the first resident priest in Helena and said the first mass in Last Chance gulch. He left Montana in 1868 and went to St. Mary's Potawatomi mission, Kansas. He died in 1916.

a bunch of slovenly sinews; each, too, had a buffalo-robe or a blue or white blanket wrapped and strapped about him; each, moreover, had his drab or black felt hat flattened down about his ears, and held securely there by his red or yellow handkerchief, or something in that line. The beards of all were crusted with the snow, their eyes were arched with snow, snow clung above their ears and to the back of their dejected heads, their horses' manes were worked with ringlets of snow, the tails of their shivering animals seemed transformed into brooms of snow-twigs, each of the poor beasts wore a **goatee of snow**—the snow, in a word, had it all its own way, just as it had on the retreat from Moscow, of which that woeful looking cavalry there before me, emerging from the freezing flood, shudderingly reminded me.

It was just in this sorry plight, if not in worse, that Iron, with an unerring instinct, guided us over the trackless prairie and the trackless hills, through the depths of that dangerous storm, to St. Peter's mission. His unerring instinct, I say, for the falling as well as the fallen snow blotted out every landmark, and it was impossible for him to exercise his knowledge of those features of the country which would have been familiar to him in kindlier weather. Whatever the talisman by which he led us, I for one surrendered myself absolutely to his guidance, shutting my eyes obstinately against the snow, throwing the bridle over the horn of the saddle, and thrusting my hands deep into the pockets of my riding-jacket. Out of this somnambulism I did not wake until the barking of a robust old dog informed us that we were trespassers, and that it was his duty to protest against our intrusion. A word from Iron, however, brought him to a sluggish silence, and then Father Kuppens thrust his cheerful face out through the flap or apron which serves as the door of the Indian tent, or tepee. Recognizing Mr. Clark, he shook hands cordially with that gentleman, who, in return, introduced his fellow-travellers, and then came a warm invitation to the cavalry to dismount and march to quarters.

St. Peter's mission, at the moment I now speak of, consisted, architecturally, of an Indian tent or **tepee**, capable of accommodating sixteen persons in Indian fashion, a wall tent, as it is called in the army, which served as a storeroom, a grinding-stone and a commodious ambulance of rather an elegant air and finish, which formerly belonged to your good friend, General Harney, and which that splendid old soldier had, as you are aware, given to the Fathers. Behind these tents and this stylish ambulance rose the beautiful, bold, and singularly picturesque hills, which from

the Dearborn to the Sun river, follow, in endless variety of crag and peak, the course of the Missouri. But all we could see were lofty white walls, with here and there, suspended, as it were, scores of feet above us, a pine or cedar of full foilage and graceful shape, shining like a tree of chastened silver, and, where the snow had fallen from its branches, gleaming and flashing with fancy-born emeralds.

You, my dear Father de Smet, are familiar with the reasons which determined the Fathers of the old mission to look out for a change of residence. The old mission, desirable in every other respect, is badly wanting in facilities for irrigation, and hence the cattle, which in the winter and early spring thrive so heartily there, owing to the fertilizing effect upon the pasturage of the rains and melting snows, in the summer and autumn suffer a good deal, and fall off in flesh considerably. Owing to the same circumstances the Fathers find it impossible to raise anything like the quantity of grain and vegetables they require.

The new mission possesses abundant means of irrigation. A copious stream of clear, bright, sweet water dashes down from the high rocky hills, of which I have this moment given you a confused glimpse through their heavy drapery of snow; and this stream, although it sinks and disappears a few hundred yards from the foot of these hills, never fails to keep the valley through which it pursues its subterranean course in the best condition for the reception and production of a plentiful supply of crops. These hills, too, are rich in every variety of wild fruit known in the territory. There are wild strawberries, wild plums, wild cherries, wild grapes, wild gooseberries, and all, Father Francis Kuppens assured me, of a most agreeable flavour. Where these abound, you will not be surprised to hear that bears are numerous in the neighborhood. Antelope, too, mountain sheep, and elk are numerous, and as for jack-rabbits and "such small deer," there won't be a lack of them for some time to come, even in the event of the mission being transformed into a shoot-lodge. As yet Father Kuppens, who is charged with the work, has not commenced building. The weather has been too broken, since he pitched his tent here, to go into the hills for the necessary timber, and the sawed lumber, which he has ordered from Helena, has not arrived. Were it in his power to buy a saw-mill, he would have an ample head of water to give him, on the spot, all the lumber he would require for buildings of far larger proportions than he contemplates.

Notwithstanding the features of the place being rendered so vague and unintelligible by the snow and the dull, leaden colour of the atmosphere, I think I succeeded in presenting satisfactorily, to my own mind at least, a correct picture of the mission of St. Peter's, as it will appear, one of these days, in the full glory of a Montana summer. A solid log-built structure, forming three sides of a square, rises from the green slope at the foot of the hills in the background. The square opens to all comers its hospitable and holy arms, for it turns its back upon the wild fruits and game, and faces towards the high road from Fort Benton to Helena. The arm on the right terminates in a cross, which informs us that the little church of St. Peter stands on that side of the square. The opposite side is occupied by the fathers and lay brothers. The long building in the rear connecting the two wings is divided off into hospital, store-room, kitchen, and refectory. The space within the square is tastefully laid out—prairie flowers bloom and shed their perfume there; young cedars and bright green shrubs from the mountain fill it with warmth. A rustic shrine, sheltering an image of the Blessed Virgin, stands in the centre of it. After a little a fountain will spring before the shrine, and brighten it with the perpetual homage of its glittering showers. Immediately behind rise those beautiful bold masses of rock, red and purple in their line for the most part, throwing out Gothic towers and buttresses, rearing themselves at other points into smooth, steep, lofty walls, that remind us of citadels and forts, whatever harshness or severity there may be in the outline of each or all of these forms being relieved, softened, beautified, and blended into the pervading sweetness of the picture by clusters of shrubs, and the shadows as well as the foilage of the graceful trees that interperse and crown the whole. The foreground is bright with a golden tillage, and where it is darkened it is so with the broad leaves and fresh earth that indicate a more domestic kind of cultivation. All over the slope, to the right and left of the buildings, and down in the bottom-land where the stream has disappeared, horses and horned cattle are leisurely and luxuriously grazing, their sleek coats burnished with the sunlight that, with richest radiance, bathes and glorifies the scene.

You may, perhaps, smile at this picture of St. Peter's mission, my dear Father de Smet, but Father Kuppens won't, nor will Father Ravalli, nor will Father Imoda, nor will Father Giorda, nor will any one else who has been to the site of the mission, and finding how much nature has done there, sees that there is very little left for exaggeration or fancy in such anticipations as I

have given way to in the last few sentences.¹² Satisfied of that, I must get back to Father Kuppen's tent.

This tent, as I have already mentioned, is capable of accommodating sixteen people in Indian fashion. It is formed of a number of prepared buffalo-skins, stretched over a number of slanting poles, which meet and cross one another at the top, leaving an aperture through which the smoke of the wood fire, in the center of the tent, rolls itself out heavily in the snow. There are a multitude of fabulous animals painted in vermillion and indigo on the weather side of the skins. As I painfully stoop and force myself through the slit which serves as a door-way, I find that, in addition to gentlemen who accompanied me from Helena (including Iron, who accompanied us from the Dearborn), there is a lanky Pennsylvanian of unusual length, who is weather-bound with his team, a country-man of mine with a dislocated leg, and a Lay-brother, with very sore eyes and catarrh, who hails from Belgium. The tent is choking full of smoke, and it is difficult to make out the exact whereabouts and the postures of the gentlemen who compose the department of the interior. Some of them, however, are seated, I perceive, like tailors at their work; others are reclining like ancient Romans after supper; the rest are kneeling like true Mahomedans at prayer, their spinal columns being propped and kept in position by their heels. As though the wood-fire failed to evolve sufficient smoke to blind and suffocate them, every one of this group was busy with his pipe, exhaling tributary currents into the main volume, which, after gaining the top of the tent, seemed to shun the weather outside, and roll back precipitately to its source.

The snow, continuing to fall, detained us at St. Peter's for a day and a half longer than we intended, during which detention we so bountifully partook of Father Kuppen's hospitality that the stores gave way. Notwithstanding the continued inclemency of the weather, soon after breakfast the third day of our visit there we had to bring in our horses, and set out for the old mission of St. Ignatius, a distance of five-and-twenty miles.¹³ Father Kuppen accompanied us, not merely to serve as our guide through the blinding storm, but to procure a fresh supply of coffee, meat, flour, and other necessities for his little camp. The accuracy with which he guided us through that bewildering

¹² Meagher was a little sanguine in his anticipations. The mission closed in April, 1866 because of Indian depredations and did not reopen until 1874. Log buildings were ultimately built though they were considerably less pretentious than those envisioned by Meagher.

¹³ See footnote 8.

wilderness, where not a solitary track or landmark cheered us, was really wonderful. No Indian could have been more sagacious and expert. When about half way to the mission he told us of the narrow escape he had just there, a few months before, from two Piegans, who rode down upon him suddenly, siezed his bridle, and insisted upon having his horse. Father Kuppens defended himself with his whip, struck the vermilioned rascals across the face a staggering blow—first one and then the other, and rapidly taking advantage of the effect of his impetuous assault, had the satisfaction of leaving his importunate acquaintances half a mile behind him in a very short time. Not, however, before he received from them a parting compliment in a shower of arrows, which pursued him with the swiftness of lightning, and one of which penetrating his thigh, inflicted a rather severe wound. Having safely distanced the unconscionable vagabonds, he dismounted, tore off one of his shirt sleeves, wound it round the bleeding limb, and checked the effusion, and then resumed his ride.

"But here we are," he cheerfully exclaimed, as a long low range of buildings emerged from the snow, and an aged dog, with toothless jaws and large red eyes, came out from behind them to make a reconnaissance. Entering through a wide gateway, such as one finds to a farm-yard in the old country, we succeeded in extricating our stiff and half-frozen feet from the stirrups after due deliberation and effort, and a moment after, were warmly greeted by Fathers Ravalli and Imoda. A smiling, hard-looking, zealous little Lay-brother—a namesake of mine from Tipperary—assisted by Iron, disencumbered our horses of their load of blankets, buffalo-ropes, pistol-holsters, and saddles, and turned them out to graze in the bottom, where pawing up the snow, they found for a week the sweet and most nutritious grass.

Father Ravalli throwing open a door, we entered a room in which a pile of cotton-wood, blazing away in the merriest style, welcomed us in to thaw. It took just such a fire to enable us to do so, for our beards and moustaches were stiff as wire net-work, noses were dead and colourless, ears reduced to leather, and integuments generally to petrification. Then came some delicious coffee, strengthened with *eau de vie*, and, half an hour after that, a dinner which banished every idea of winter and desolation. Prairie hens, antelope, jackrabbits, abounding about the mission, in severe weather, especially, keep its table, generally speaking, well supplied. The storm holding out, the hospitable quarters of St. Ignatius were our sanctuary for a week. My companions were

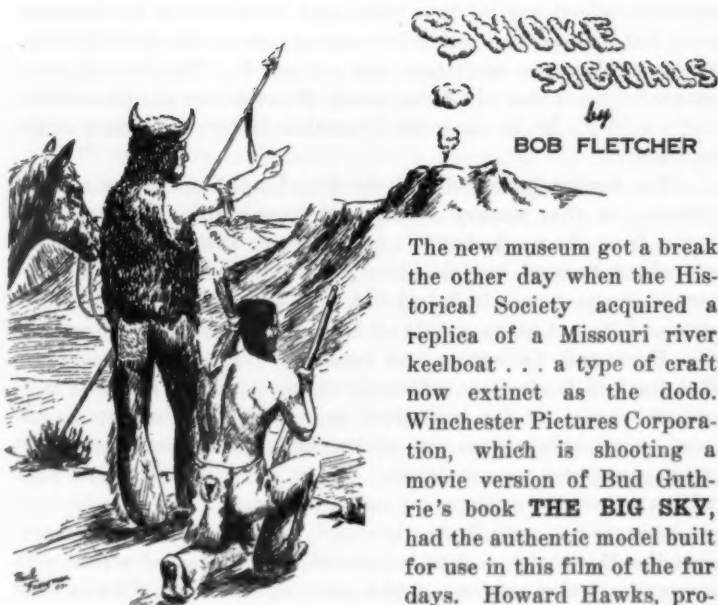
delighted and charmed with the good Fathers, all the more so that, with the exception of Mr. Clark, who had long been familiar with their goodness and their history, the benighted travellers had never before shaken hands with a Jesuit, and, having preconceived anything but flattering ideas of the sons of Loyola, were rather astonished to find so much true nobility of heart and mind under a threadbare and patched soutane. As for me, I need not, I think assure you that the few days we spent there were to me days of the brightest happiness. In the sunny presence and cordial society of these dear, gentle, noble Fathers, many—very many—of the golden recollections of the cloudless and unembittered days of my boyhood and College life came crowding back to me, and thus, even in the midst of that storm, and after years of no very friendly experience of the world, was the spring-time of my life—with all its flowers and melodies, hopefulness and sprightliness—renewed.

Having extended this letter so far, I must not permit myself to be led into a description of the mission of St. Ignatius, but shall reserve this pleasant subject for a future communication, which, in grateful consideration of the firm foundations you have laid for the glorious Catholic Church in Montana, I shall deem it my duty to send you before long. As it is my intention to visit also the missions of your chivalrous and indomitable Order on the other side of the Rocky Mountains in the course of the next summer, I think I may venture to promise that my correspondence in relation to them will be more interesting to you than the present can be.

With the most affectionate esteem, believe me to remain, my dear Father de Smet,

Your faithful friend,

Thomas Francis Meagher,
Acting Governor, Territory of Montana



The new museum got a break the other day when the Historical Society acquired a replica of a Missouri river keelboat . . . a type of craft now extinct as the dodo. Winchester Pictures Corporation, which is shooting a movie version of Bud Guthrie's book **THE BIG SKY**, had the authentic model built for use in this film of the fur days. Howard Hawks, producer and director of the picture, acting in behalf of the Winchester company presented this boat to the Historical Society in a response to a wire from Governor John Bonner. Wyoming and Missouri also were bidders for the unusual river bark. Missouri's interest is understandable.

The boat will be trucked by the Highway Department from Moran, Wyoming where location photography for **The Big Sky** is being completed. It will be displayed in the covered outdoor museum area behind the new Veterans-Pioneer Memorial Building in Helena. As added dividends the Society will receive a great deal of historical material concerning keelboats in general as collected by the WPC research department and large pictures of this particular specimen in action. Inasmuch as Montana claims A. B. Guthrie as her own it is too bad that further local color couldn't have been injected by having Gary Cooper on the tow rope and Myrna Loy at the helm when the takes were made.

However the Society is duly grateful for the acquisition without further trimmings. It is possible that additional types

of river craft may be acquired from time to time until there is a complete collection. Perhaps no eager ear will ever hear a full scale steamboat comin' roun' the bend to tie up at the museum levee but it is not impossible for some generous ship-model hobbyist to build one in miniature and present it. The size of other outmoded craft that plied the moody Missouri are not prohibitive and would gladly be accepted if another Hollywood donor could be found.

The fur trade introduced the first long-distance commercial cruising on that watery avenue. Trappers and traders took a lesson from the bowl shaped coracles which the Indians made by stretching dressed buffalo hides over willow frames. They enlarged the pattern, which had lightness and shallow draft to recommend it, and many a bale of beaver pelves bounced down the Big Horn and Yellowstone in frail conveyances of this design. But the bull boats were primarily cargo carriers. For fast messenger service or for individual use, the mountain men hewed very serviceable canoes out of the huge cottonwood trees that grew along the river bottoms. When such dugouts were built with a square stern they were called pirogues.

A more substantial aquatic contrivance for downstream travel was the Mackinaw, a double pointed, flat bottomed affair with a sway back that rose to a rakish point at both ends. It was built of rough planks, hand sawed from square hewn logs in the chantier or boatyard that was an adjunct to each upriver trading post of consequence. Some of them were as much as fifty feet long with a twelve foot beam and were capable of carrying fifteen tons. Originally the crew was taken for a one way ride and at the end of the voyage the makinaw was sold for a few dollars. When steamboats came into use mackinaws were occasionally shipped back upstream and used a second time.

Keelboats were freighters that cost anywhere from \$2,000 to \$3,000 in days of cheap labor and materials. The ponderous vessels were from sixty to seventy feet long with a fifteen to eighteen foot beam and a three to four foot depth of hold. They were built with a cargo box that extended several feet above the deck and to within twelve feet of each end. A fifteen inch cleated walk ran along each side of the box which was used when it became necessary for the crew to "walk" the boat against the current with long, ash poles. However awkward keelboats may have been in appearance, they were stoutly built to withstand the mauling of rapids, snags, floating timber and sandbars and combined the virtues of shallow draft with large cargo capacity.

Propelling a keelboat was no idle pastime. They were 'cordelled' or towed upstream with a line running from a high mast stepped a little forward of midship. The line was rove through a ring which was connected to the bow by a short line. This arrangement was to carry the tow line clear of brush along the shore. It took considerable man power on the free end of the line to tow one of the bulky boats when heavily laden.

Where shore conditions were unfavorable for cordelling it was some times necessary to resort to poling. Each boatman was provided with a "setting pole" equipped with a knob that fitted the hollow of his shoulder. The men would set the other end of their poles on the river bed slanting them downstream and walk aft in single file on the narrow deck strip pushing as they went. When the lead man reached the stern he would retrieve his pole and return to the bow to start again. In this fashion there was an endless chain of boatmen in action. There is a technical question involved in such procedure. At the end of the day had these stalwart gentlemen been riding upstream or walking downstream and if they walked downstream as fast as they rode upstream how did they manage to get anywhere?

At any rate cordelling, poling and rowing were operations usually performed by French voyageurs who, like the men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition miraculously retained enough zip at the end of a backbreaking day to cavort to the music of a fiddle. It required from twenty five to forty men on the end of the tow line to cordelle one of the massive arks against the stubborn Missouri current. The indefatigable and driving Manuel Liza made a record run in 1811 when his picked crew did about 1,100 miles in sixty one days.

* * * * *

On September 16, a celebration was held at Absarokee, Stillwater County, to commemorate the signing of an Indian treaty at old Fort Laramie just a hundred years before. By that treaty the U. S. Government conceded ownership to the tribes of almost all of Wyoming and Montana lying north of the North Platte River and east of the front range. As usual it was to belong to the Indians "forever". At the original council ten thousand braves from Arapahoe, Sioux, Crow, Cheyenne, Snake and other tribes were assembled. Their chiefs were to parley with the white representatives who were supported by about two hundred soldiers. Jim Bridger remarked afterwards, "You dragoons acted nice but you wouldn't have had no show if a fight had commenced." Besides the ubiquitous Jim, Father de Smet and

Thomas (Broken hand) Fitzpatrick, famous mountain man, were present. The treaty was a futile gesture.

It wasn't long before constant complaint to Congress from hysterical emigrants, distrust, sniping and retaliations by both sides brought about a state of open warfare, which is another and not a very pleasant story. In the past 100 years the Crow reservation has shrunk like a twenty dollar suit in a summer shower. In light of this and other circumstances it is difficult to see just why the centennial should have been marked by a parade, a picnic featuring buffalo burgers, a beauty contest and speeches of course. It doesn't seem to us that the original owners of that fair empire had much to celebrate. However it was reported that a good time was had by all including a substantial number of Crow Indians. After all buffalo burgers are a novelty these days, even to a red man.

The Crows thought well of their ancestral hunting grounds as witness the description of it given by Chief Arrapooash to Robert Campbell, the fur trader and reported in Washington Irving's *Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (1832).

The Crow country, is a good country. The Great Spirit has put it exactly in the right place; while you are in it you fare well; whenever you go out of it, whichever way you travel, you fare worse. If you go to the south you have to wander over great barren plains; the water is warm and bad, and you meet the fever and ague. To the north it is cold; the winters are long and bitter, with no grass; you cannot keep horses there but must travel with dogs. What is a country without horses?

On the Columbia they are poor and dirty, paddle about in canoes, and eat fish. Their teeth are worn out; they are always taking fish bones out of their mouths. Fish is poor food.

To the east, they dwell in villages; they live well but they drink the muddy water of the Missouri—that is bad. A Crow's dog would not drink such water. About the forks of the Missouri is a fine country; good water, good grass; plenty of buffalo. In summer it's almost as good as the Crow country; but in winter it is cold; the grass is gone; and there is no salt weed for the horses. The Crow country is exactly in the right place. It has snowy mountains and sunny plains; all kinds of climates and good things for every season. When the summer heats scorch the prairies, you can draw up under the mountains, where the air is sweet and cool, the grass fresh, and the bright streams come tumbling out of the snow-banks. There you can hunt the elk, the deer, and the antelope, when their skins are fit for dressing; there you will find plenty of white bears and mountain sheep.

In the autumn when your horses are fat and strong from mountain pastures, you can go down into the plains and hunt

the buffalo, or trap beaver on the streams. And when winter comes on, you can take shelter in the woody bottoms along the rivers; there you will find buffalo meat for yourselves, and cotton-wood bark for your horses; or you may winter in the Wind River valley, where there is salt weed in abundance.

The Crow country is exactly in the right place. Everything is good to be found there. There is no country like the Crow country.

Even a generation ago the naive redskins cherished the idea that virgin prairie covered with range grass and buffalo herds was a very pleasing sight. That sort of vista was not only inspiring but also afforded them a liberal supply of provisions and pastime. They hadn't been told about the beauty and utility of barbed wire and canned goods. They couldn't see that overalls were more practical and picturesque than buckskin leggins fringed with scalp locks. They couldn't agree that rancid, government-issue sow bosom excelled prime buffalo ribs as a gastronomical treat. Following the plow didn't seem to hold the same thrill as forking a glass-eyed pinto pony on a high lope. All in all it looked as through the Great White Father's promise of the more abundant life was going to cramp their style. It did.

* * * * *

The Society of Montana Pioneers held its 67th annual convention in Helena in conjunction with the 59th annual convention of the Sons and Daughters of the Pioneers, August 22, 23 and 24. There was a gratifying attendance of pioneers, some twenty being present with an average age of eighty six. The old timers powdered in the lobby of the Placer Hotel, crossed the plains and came up the river in retrospection, toured Last Chance Gulch, attended meetings and made speeches at a banquet on the evening of the 24th. The silvertips were silver tongued having been reared in an age when orators like Governor Joe Toole and Major Martin Maginnis played on the emotions of their audiences with supreme artistry. On the afternoon of the 24th the new Veterans-Pioneer Memorial Building which will house the Historical Society, the Library and the Museum, was dedicated by the Governor. The building is to be one of the finest of its kind in the nation. It will be ready for occupancy by early spring.

* * * * *

One of the finest private contributions yet to be made to Montana culture is the Archie Bray Foundation. Located three miles west of Helena near the Country Club it is a ceramic art center equipped with the last word in clay testing laboratory, kiln room, pottery room, glaze room, display room and pottery library.

A complete stock of ceramic supplies will be maintained as well as modern potters' wheels, ball mills and screens. It is a ceramist's dream come true.

From time to time bulletins will be issued giving a list of stocks and supplies available, price and market information and bits of news taken from recent publications about pottery. The ceramics group is an important and growing part of the Montana Institute of the Arts and the members are going to welcome and appreciate the founder's vision and generosity. There is little doubt but that the center will become the headquarters for ceramic art in the Pacific Northwest. Archie Bray's inherent love of the fine arts has inspired him to bring many other cultural benefits to Montana people. Self effacing and magnanimous to a fault, he has brought great artists to the state with no thought of gain but simply so that he might hear them and share the pleasure with the public. The Archie Bray Foundation will be a substantial and fitting memorial to a modest, unselfish citizen.

* * * * *

With this issue of the Montana Magazine of History most of the subscriptions expire. A publication of this sort is a venture long over due in Montana. It deserves your whole hearted financial support and your active interest. The editors have plans and ambitions for the magazine that cannot be realized without it. Won't you please take immediate advantage of the gift subscription blank in this issue and above all don't fail us by forgetting to resubscribe yourself.

* * * * *

ERRATA—In Vol. I, No. 2, p 5 change name John Ferdinand Bishop to John Fernando Bishop. In Vol. I, No. 3, p 39, para. 5 change date August 4, 1864 to August 4, 1884.



BOOK REVIEWS

STOCK RAISING IN THE NORTHWEST 1884. Translated, with historical note by Herbert C. Brayer. (Branding Iron Press: Evanston, 1951) 43 pp.

For collectors of good Western Americana, this is a worthy—although small-sized-volume. Along with excellent content, both in the introductory annotations by Brayer and his translations from the French writing of G. Weis, the forty-odd pages have been attractively designed and printed in a pleasing, hard-cover format by Phillip Reed, with neat illustrations by David Vernon.

For those of us who have been interested for more than a decade in the Western Range Cattle Industry Study directed by Brayer, it is pleasing to note that this little gem is the first of a series of vignettes which will be edited and published as part of the Study.

It is to be hoped that the final volume, or volumes, which should result from this exhaustive research, will follow in the not too-distant future. There is a real need for more detailed and fresh historical writing on the western range era.

As explained by Brayer, the book came into being in this way:

"G. Weis was another of the French middle class group that immigrated to America after the war with Prussia. . . A keen observer, he was quick to sense the advantage of the Montana ranges and by 1881 had purchased a ranch on the Musselshell and a herd of 850 cattle."

" . . . No record of a brand registered in his name could be located, and he does not appear as an officer, incorporator, or stockholder in any ranch of which records were found."

"During 1883 and 1884 Hubert Howe Bancroft was engaged in assembling materials for his monumental volumes which included Montana. When Weis visited San Francisco in May 1884, the shrewd publisher sold the French stockman a set of his volumes and persuaded him to write a description of the ranching business in Montana. Weis acquiesced, and the result was a twenty-four page handwritten manuscript—in French."

Then Brayer accurately adds, "The value of Weis' observations lies in the objectivity, the fact that there are but few other first hand descriptions of the range cattle business at its zenith

written by French ranchmen, and the unconscious philosophy of the somewhat naive author."

Actually, these "Notes Recueillies sur les Elevages d'animaux dans les Etats de l'Ouest de L'Amerique du Nord"—as G. Weis titled the paper prepared for Bancroft—are quite pedantic. As such, on the surface, they might constitute dull reading for some. But when one evaluates the authentic glimpse of life in an era remarkably noted for lack of written record—and which has since been so fantastically portrayed in the horse operas and wild westerns—then their value is amplified.

And even the pedanticism of the translated portion is more than offset by the provocation and sparkle in Mr. Brayer's introduction. He mentions the more romantic types, such as Marquis de Mores and Baron de Bonnemains. He discusses the rather sizeable group of Britishers, too, who came west to manage "some thirty-eight major ranching companies with an investment of more than Forty-two million dollars who were headquartered in London, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee."

In further explanation of the how and why of foreign contributions to American's range cattle industry, Mr. Brayer's charming introduction recounts this dialogue—during his period of research in the British Isles—with a former minister of state:

"You Americans are indeed a strange people. You take the best the world has to offer, adapt it, improve it, rename it and then claim it as your own. Take this range cattle industry of yours, for example. Nothing more American, you say. Just like ham and eggs—although Lord knows Englishmen were eating that dish at least a century before Virginia was settled! When you examine the business closely what do you find: Shorthorn cattle from Durham and other English counties; Angus stock from Scotland, Herefords from Herefordshire. The same is true of all your farm beasts, horses, cattle, sheep, hogs and even chickens. Yes and what about your cowboys?"

"Listen to a few taken names from our Wyoming ranch crews: 'Swede' Larson, 'Dutch' Schmidt, 'Mex' Gorceia, 'Nigger' Jones, 'Scotty' Washburn, 'Frenchy' Barteau, and 'Kanuck' Simons. Although I can't prove it, I suspect that over half the men on the Swan Ranch in 1884 were sons of immigrants and from five to ten per cent were born abroad."

Mr. Brayer adds:

"I confessed that I thought the percentages a trifle high, but that basically the concept of foreign contributions to the American cattle trade was correct even though usually overlooked."

Michael Kennedy

Northwestern University.

I AM LIDIAN, by Naomi Lane Babson. (Harcourt, Brace & Co: New York) 311 pp.

This is a solid and beautiful novel. It is a book which fulfills the duty of a novelist—to entertain, to tell a story to present characters and actions that represent real life.

Miss Babson does not attempt to be a psychiatrist, or a philosopher, or a poet. She is a fine enough novelist to give her characters and their conduct such honest consideration and such loving care that they are revealed completely in the round, true to life and true to themselves.

The book is the story of Lidian Dorie, Massachusetts-born, remembering, in Grandview, Montana, ninety years of life. There is always a certain excitement about Lidian's life. She is proud and vibrant as a young girl, full of the dreaming idealism natural to the young. As a woman following her husband, first in a traveling theatrical troupe, then in a wagon train to Montana, Lidian grows, and learns, and suffers—not as a story-book heroine, or as an actress in an epic, but as a woman you know.

The telling of the story is realistic and imaginative at the same time. The author has a great talent for words, for their sounds and their connotations. Much is felt that is never quite stated.

I AM LIDIAN is not an historical novel. Lidian lives through significant history, but is never part of it. Even the Civil War is remote, although Miss Babson's paragraphs about it are stirring and memorable writing. It is a real credit to the author that her characters might have lived at any time. Even so, the flavor of the years from 1838 to 1868 pervades the book.

All the characters are sharply drawn, especially the companions of childhood, but no one of them overshadows Lidian herself.

The novel is unusually interesting reading—as a good story, as a fine character study, and as a very important addition to the literature of the state.

Susan Eaker

Helena.

WESTERN LAND AND WATER USE, by Mont H. Saunderson
(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950) Illustrations;
bibliography; index, 217 pp.

The aridity of certain portions of the west has produced a good deal of legislation as well as a good deal of writing. In both realms there seems to have been a paucity of sober thought on the subject. Here is a book, fortunately, that may be classed as sober. There is no "jazzing" of the subject, no appeal to the spectacular, no panacea offered.

Saunderson points out that the next decade or so will determine whether or not we can learn to use the resources of the arid lands without destroying them. He points out that with few exceptions peoples in the older countries of the world fell victim to errors which resulted in desolate conditions in formerly prosperous regions. They did not gauge the extent of the "imbalance" caused by man's occupancy of arid and semi-arid regions. Erosion, the predominance of cheat grass, barren upland water sheds, floods, dust bowls all testify to this imbalance.

In addition to the standard counteractive methods, Saunderson stresses the necessity of watershed management to the point of stating that life and civilization in the arid west depends upon the maintenance of the watersheds.

There are comprehensive suggestions aimed at improving the calibre of resource management, some methodological others administrative, all based on a very thorough study of the problem. While he proposes a joint federal-state solution and faces the fact that federal planning is essential, he does not blandly accept the river-basin development concept as the answer. The present program for the Missouri Valley he conceives of as being "too narrow, not well matured, and has had too much and too rapid 'bureau planning'." He warns that such planning could result in great and far reaching mistakes that "would warp the economy of the regions or cause the tremendous investments required to yield only limited benefits."

On a subject which has attracted too many polemicists and too few scholars, Saunderson writes with a sure grasp of his materials and a well conceived, if conservative, philosophy. It is a book all westerners could profitably read.

Herbert L. Maxwell

Los Angeles, California.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CITIES, edited by Ray B. West, Jr. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1949) 320pp.

The best thing about this volume is the introduction by Carey McWilliams. The book consists of a series of essays on towns in the Rocky Mountains which, presumably, are somehow representative of larger regions. The towns included are: Butte, Reno, the Coeur d'Alene district, El Paso, Cheyenne, Albuquerque, Salt Lake City, Tucson, Santa Fe and Denver.

Like most such cooperative efforts, however, this one comes close to hodge podge. The presentation is disorderly, there is no chronological core, it is difficult to call the work history, it isn't strictly folk-lore, there is a smattering of economics, a lot of anecdote and a liberal dose of bias. There is too much an admixture of opinion and fact and too little real analysis.

In trying to tie these varied communities into a unity of some sort, Carey McWilliams in an able introduction states: "Cheyenne is Wyoming; Denver is Colorado; Reno is Nevada." This is very dubious. Butte, certainly, is not Montana. It has more often than not been out of step, behind or ahead of the rest of the state. Butte is ordinarily representative only of Butte, historically and at present. And to a certain extent at least this is true of the other towns in this book. To state simply that the heterogeneity of the towns of the west reflects the west itself is an over simplification.

Yet, with all these drawbacks, **Rocky Mountain Cities** is worth reading. If you can get around the disorganization there is a lot of information in the book. In the main, the individual essayists know their cities well. McWilliam's introduction is clever and provocative—though his liberalism will undoubtedly alienate a good many. The book, in any event, is a contribution to the literature of the inter-mountain west.

Ross Toole

Helena.

WESTWARD EXPANSION, by Ray Allen Billington (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949) 873pp.

Written with the collaboration of James Blaine Hedges this book "attempts to follow the pattern Frederick Jackson Turner might have used had he ever compressed his voluminous researches on the American frontier within one volume." The book is filled with maps and boasts a bibliographical note of 78 pages which includes monographs as well as books.

A tremendous amount of labor went into this book. Though it is a bit too voluminous and too detailed for an undergraduate text, western historians in general and people interested in specific phases of the history of the west will find it very useful. Though it does not have the perspective of several of the less comprehensive works on western history and though this first edition has more peripheral errors than it ought, it is and will remain for a long time a basic work.

The section on the inter-mountain west which includes Montana is often skimpy, but Billington can hardly be blamed for the lack of balance which the kind of historical material of a secondary nature available on this region makes inevitable.

Those whose first love is the trans-Mississippi fur trade will find it treated in a rather off-handed manner. There are those, however, to whom such treatment will be manifestly satisfactory. It is true that on the basis of economic importance, the fur trade was extremely ephemeral in spite of the quantity of historical material available about it.

Of the book's three sections: The Colonial Frontier; The Trans-Appalachian Frontier and the Trans-Mississippi Frontier, the latter section, comprising eighteen chapters, is an admirable unit in itself. Three of these chapters: The Annexation of Texas, The Occupation of Oregon and the Conquest of California were written by James Blaine Hedges and are excellently done.

The principal criticism this reviewer has of the work is simply that it tries to partake of the nature of an exhaustive reference work and to be readable and cohesive at the same time. This duality sometimes results in rough going. But Billington's book is a real accomplishment and a very positive contribution to western history.

John Carey

Los Angeles, California.

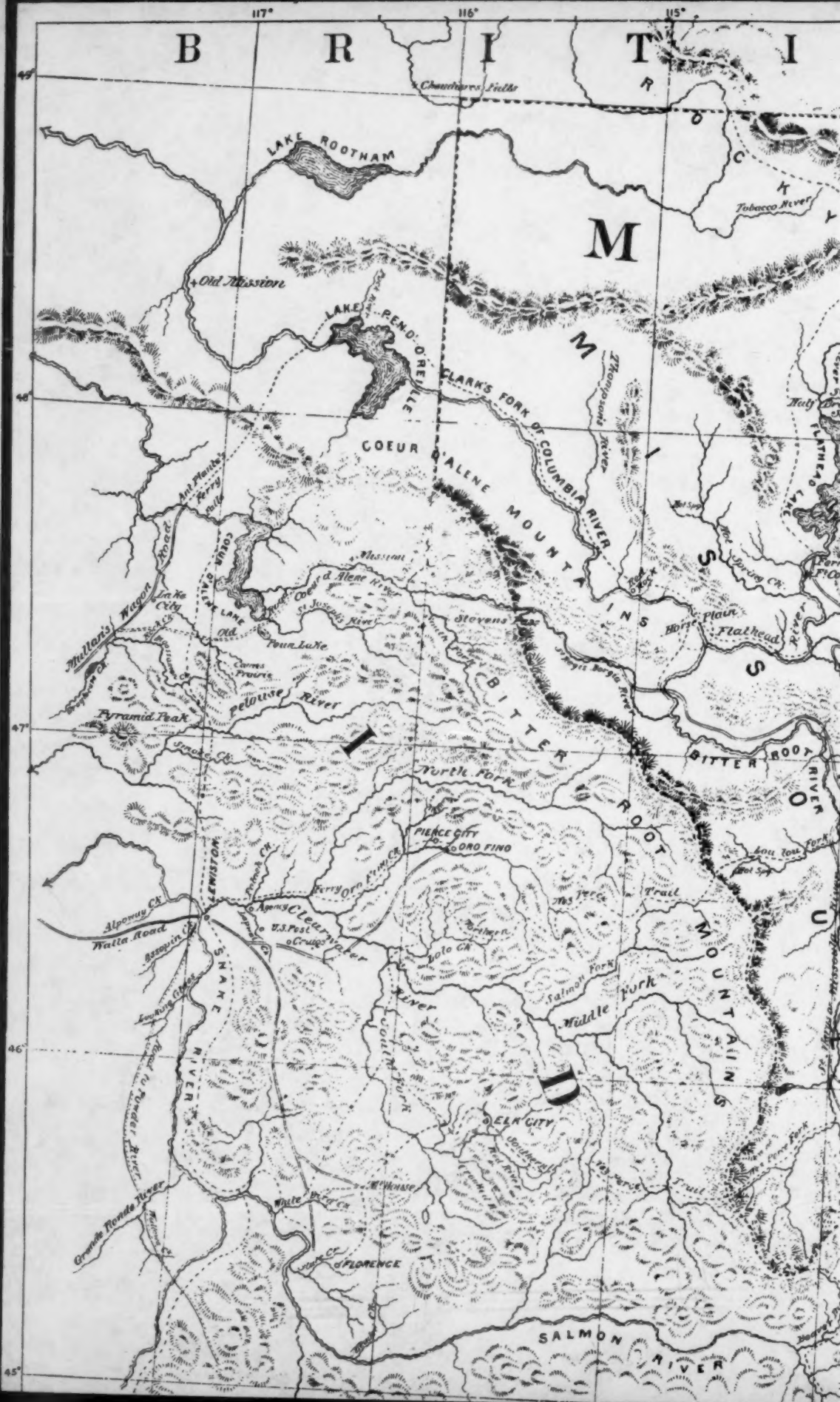
CONTRIBUTORS

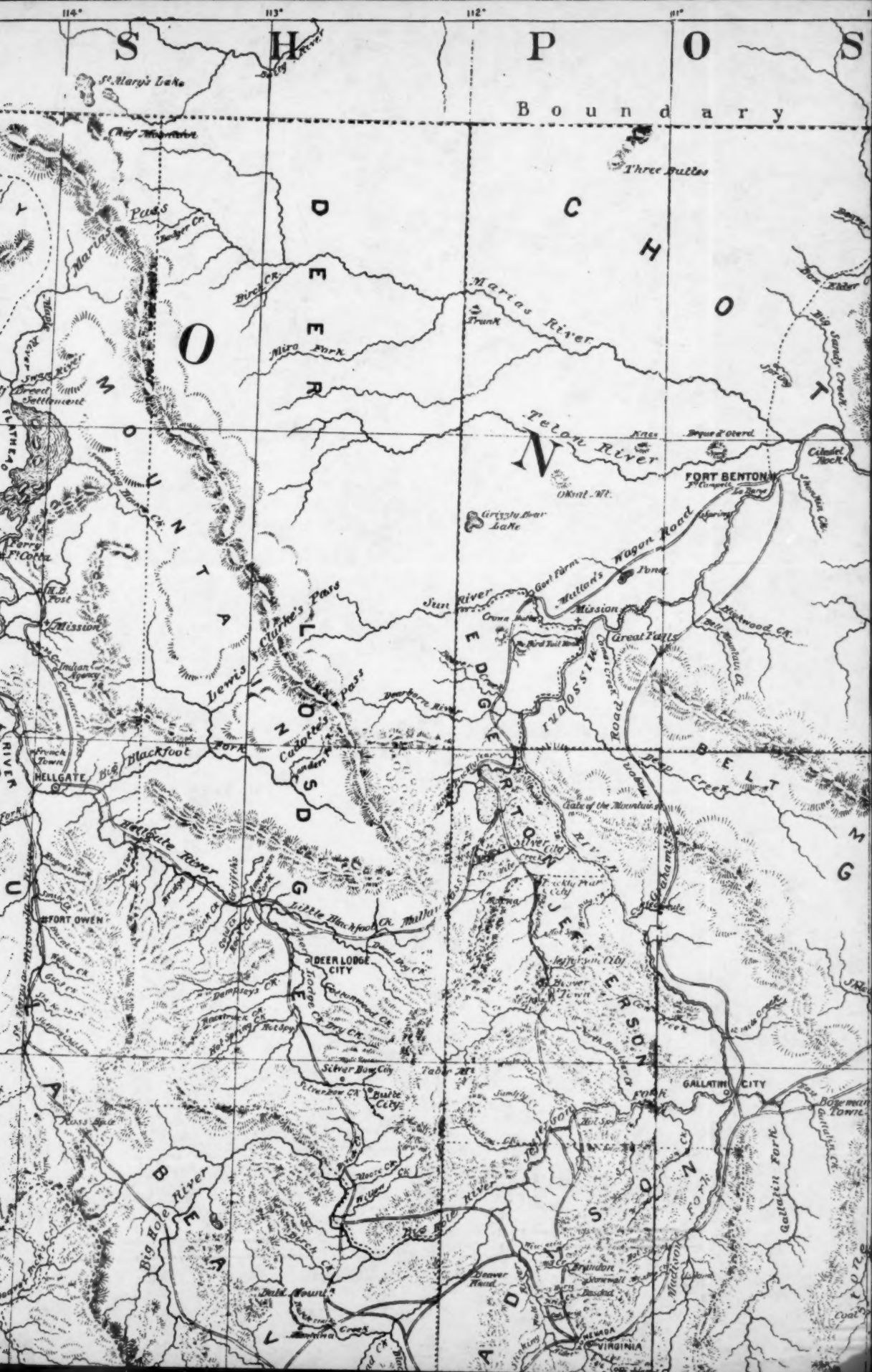
Ray H. Mattison was formerly historian at Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park at Medora, North Dakota. At the present time he is serving as historian with the Region Two Office, National Park Service, in Omaha. He is engaged in making a survey of the historic sites in the reservoir areas along the main stem of the Missouri river. He is the author of several research reports dealing with Theodore Roosevelt and the open range cattle industry.

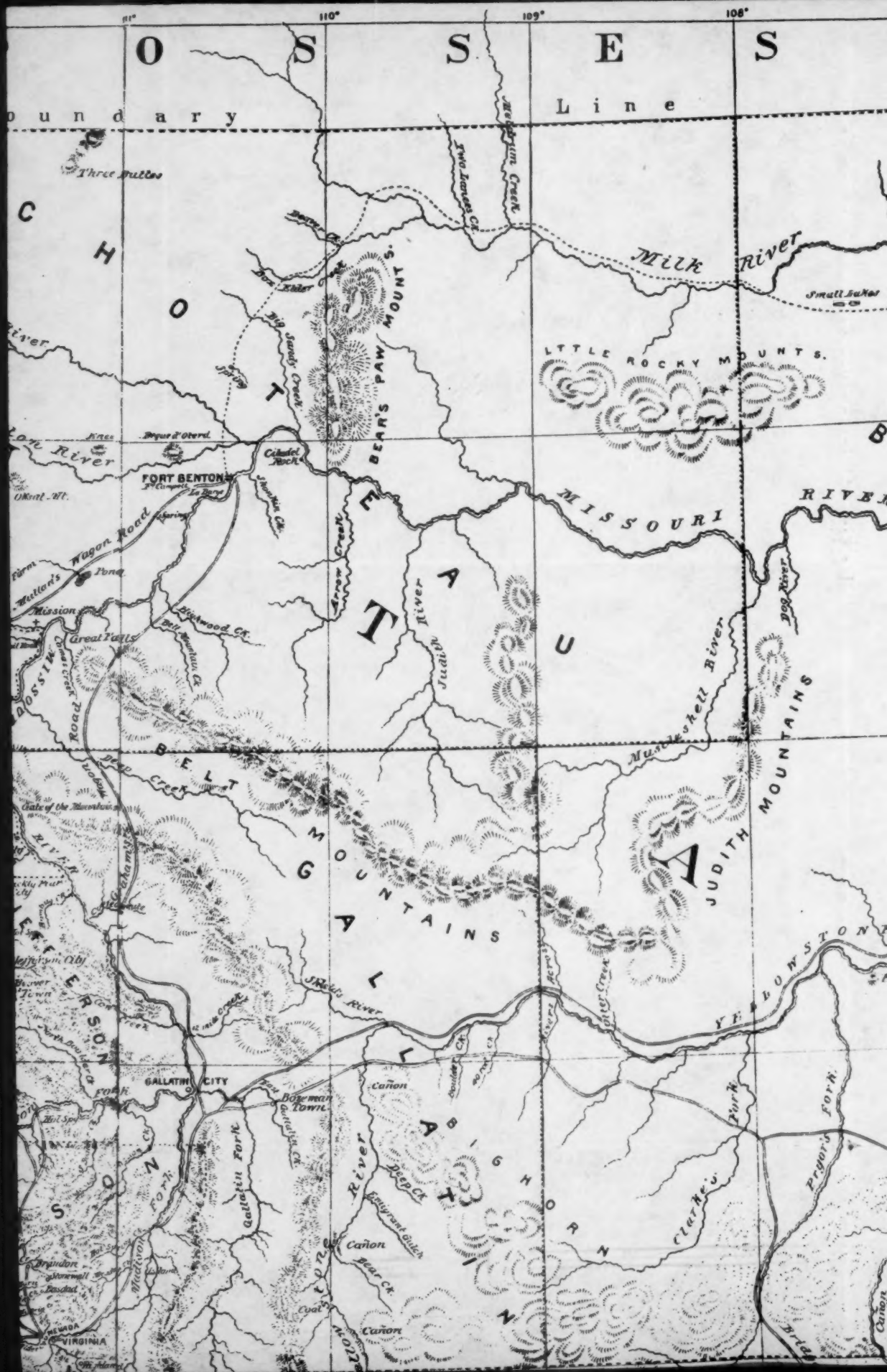
J. Leonard Bates is completing work on a Ph.D in history at the University of Maryland. He is presently engaged in writing a biography of T. J. Walsh.

Richard Forbis is completing work on a Ph.D in Anthropology at Columbia University. Mr. Forbis taught for a year at the University of Montana prior to going east to complete his graduate work. He has done field work in Anthropology at various sites in Montana—the most recent at Montana City, just outside Helena.

Anne McDonnell is known to western historians all over the country. Her contributions to the history of Montana lie in the meticulousness of her research and in the sure and certain insight with which she has built up the historical library in this state over a period of many years. As archivist and librarian she has performed a service for which she has received too little mention. It is not an exaggeration to say that her knowledge of Montana history exceeds that of any living person.













Map OF THE TERRITORY OF MONTANA

WITH PORTIONS OF THE ADJOINING TERRITORIES.

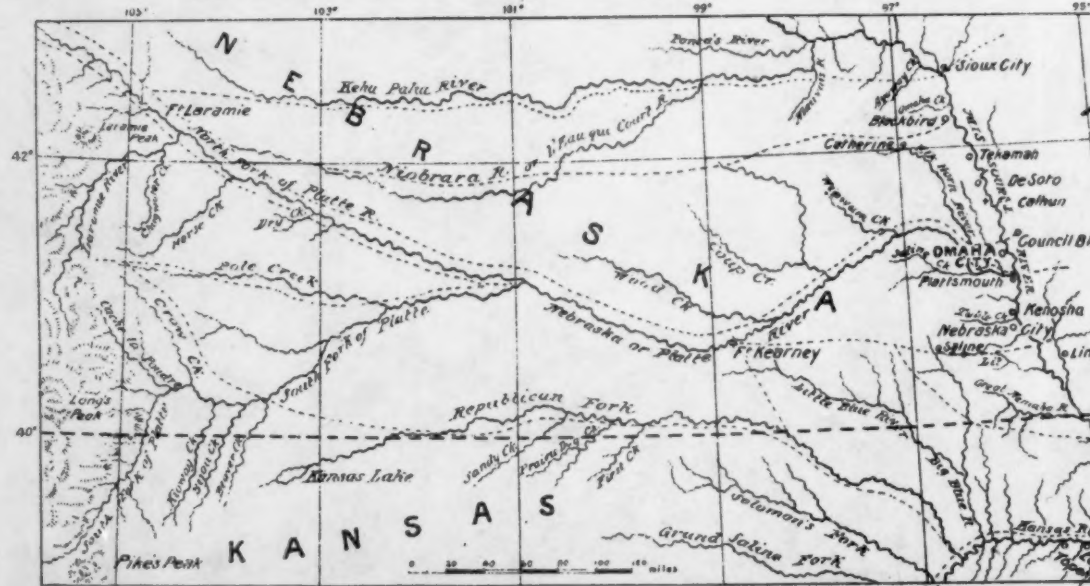
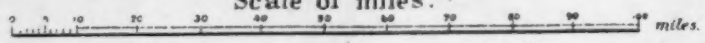
*Showing the Gulch or Placer Diggings actually worked,
and Districts where Quartz (Gold & Silver) Lodes
have been discovered to January 1st 1865.*

Gulch diggings.  Quartz Lodes. 

Drawn by W. W. de Lacy, for the use of

THE FIRST LEGISLATURE OF MONTANA.

Scale of miles.



*Map showing the Routes from the Missouri River to Fort Laramie
where they connect with the large Map.*

